ART AND COMMON SENSE

ROYAL CORTISSOZ

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Art and Common Sense

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By Royal Cortissoz

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I

Art and Common Sense

I

ART AND COMMON SENSE

THERE are some impenetrable mysteries about a great work of art. The creative impulse behind it, the skill of eye and hand indispensable to its making, its strange garment of style — which is doubly strange because it proclaims both the individuality of the artist and the indefinable tie of distinction binding all the masterpieces of all the arts together in a common glory — who shall designate the origin of these things or dogmatize about the processes whereby genius makes them do its bidding? Genius itself cannot read the riddle. But so long as men care for art they will go on talking about it, as they have been talking about it since art began, for there is no greater happiness than that which is to be found in disinterested talk about the things of the mind. Whether we get any forrader or not — and in spite of the mysteries there is always progress to be made in this elusive subject — depends altogether upon just that point, whether we are disinterested or not. Everything lies in the method of approach and there, I think, is the source of much of the confusion prevalent to-day, the explanation of certain errors characteristic of many

artists and of certain misunderstandings and bewilderments often leading the public astray.

We hear a great deal about the artist's point of view and the necessity for the layman's acquiring it, if he can venture upon so difficult an emprise. Then there is the critic's point of view, quaintly supposed in countless studios, and out of them, too, for that matter, to be antagonistic to the artist's, which is recommended to the layman in the same way. He, poor, harried mortal, if he is wise, will make himself acquainted with both, but he will not try to make either the one or the other, exclusively, his own. He will use them impartially, rather, to fertilize his intelligence and will seek to develop a third, independent, point of view, by which I do not mean the caprice of an egotist, but the open-mindedness of a lover of beauty, and, above all, common sense. The absence of that homely element from the counsels of pretty nearly everybody concerned has in my opinion done more than anything else to promote bad art, to retard appreciation of good, and to breed generally a habit of false thinking. I withdraw not so much as the shadow of a shade from what I have just said about the impenetrable mystery residing in a great work of art, but I would as unqualifiedly assert that for the purposes of right thinking about a great work of art there is in it no mystery whatever. It is the work of human hands, and meant, just in proportion as it *is* a great work of art, for human nature's daily

food. Common sense, I maintain, must force us to this conclusion and in doing so compel us to revise a quantity of long fashionable doctrine.

The doctrine, to tell the truth, is honeycombed with superstition and its ritual is packed with cant phrases. Artists and critics alike are addicted to an oracular jargon, only the smallest part of which can justify itself as legitimate technical terminology. What is more, this mode of expression, which might, perhaps, be condoned as only a mode of expression, is too often but the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible bigotry, which would reserve the appreciation of art to a chosen few. Well, there is an old saying anent the fabrication of silk purses which has never lost its point. While the catholic appreciation of art is partly a matter of experience and education it is also a matter of instinct and one may possess that instinct or not, by the whim of nature, as one may possess or lack an ear for music. There are people who could not be lured by years of a patient mentor's loving kindness to comprehend even the rudiments of a fine picture. But what, pray, have they to do with the question? To drag them in would be about as relevant as to drag an untutored rustic into a discussion of European diplomacy. No, the real significance of the grand, gloomy and peculiar hypothesis of art lies in the unconfessed but nevertheless unmistakable tendency of its advocates to detach their subject from common under-

standing, to invest it with a kind of sublime aloofness, as though it were something too sacred to be touched with any freedom at all save by priest-like, "expert" hands. Hence a great laying down of laws, by artists and critics alike, I repeat; hence the oscillation of the layman between an uneasy self-assertion, in the patter of the moment, and a pitiful timidity. There is little chance in these circumstances for those who would merely look at a work of art for what it is.

They have had particularly hard luck in respect to the art of Italy. I should be an ingrate if I were to underestimate the writings of those modern scholars who have done so much to organize a body of information relating to the Renaissance masters. No one whose business it is to deal with works of art could fail to profit by the books and periodicals in which the lives of the old painters are cleared up, while their works are put in more systematic order, and, in many cases, the list of a given master's productions is shortened or lengthened to the advantage of truth and knowledge. The quasi-scientific method by which all this is accomplished, too, commands only respect so long as it remains but a means to an end. But pride of success in the employment of a method has reacted to a preposterous extent upon the modern school of art criticism. Too many members of it spend their time taking in one another's washing, so to say, embellishing trivial themes with a wealth of learning out of all proportion to the intrinsic interest of the

subject, flattering one another half to death with stately allusions, and casting not one scornful thought to the hungry sheep who look up and are not fed. The "general reader" is assumed to be a hopelessly negligible factor, utterly and eternally unfitted to receive the pure milk of the word. One may put up with all this "bounce" when the scientific school has something worth while to say on a valuable topic and still be impatient of the nonsense that goes with it. There is the hierophant of connoisseurship who is nothing if not a devotee of research and has substituted for the Correggiosity of Correggio the Morellianism of Morelli. Somewhere in the course of his ever so knowing travels he picks up a little picture of a Madonna, authorship unknown. First he talks about its tactile values, its morphological traits, and its deep spiritual content. Then he explains how it affiliates itself to this or that school and winds up by either inventing a new master for his treasure or tacking the latter on to the record of some historic genius. Meanwhile it is plain that his picture is nothing more nor less than a modest souvenir of some fifteenth-century journeyman who, in the course of the day's work, made it for the local convent and went cheerfully on to the next job. There was nothing morphological about him.

Let me not risk even the appearance of innuendo. The discoveries and reconstructive analyses associated with the name of Mr. Berenson have been of too sig-

nal a service to the history and criticism of art for me to think of directing against his solid achievements the mild satire in which I have ventured to indulge. But I believe that even Mr. Berenson would grant that the kind of criticism here deprecated has flourished exceedingly of late years and that it has done an immense amount of harm. It has exaggerated minor issues and especially it has thrown dust in the eyes of the layman, who has looked on at these pontifical proceedings in despair of getting at the bottom of them. How, he has wondered, could he ever hope to be initiated into the meaning of such solemnities? He has not needed the initiation. He has only needed to use a little common sense in order to realize when he was being rationally instructed and when he was having his leg pulled. Looking at the unimportant little Madonna in question, with eyes not by any means untrained in the perception of beauty, he has been literally terrorized into the suppression of his opinion of the picture as a feeble, uninteresting and even ugly work. Yet in that opinion he is often absolutely right.

Relief for him from the tyranny of critical vanities is apparently in sight. M. Bourget, in "La Dame qui a perdu son peintre," Mr. Henry James, in "The Outcry," and a number of other writers of fiction, have brought a gentle ridicule to bear upon the Morellian principle carried to excess. Sooner or later the pedants who persist in getting between beauty and

her votaries will be laughed out of court, and the scholar in art criticism will perform his useful function without casting a blight upon the things he touches. In the meantime the layman, escaping perhaps from the critic, is only too apt to fall, in serio-comic fashion, into the arms of the artist; and then I am not sure but that the last state of the tormented man is worse then the first. The danger he runs is serious enough in the broad matter of taste. The artist, save in rare instances, and those chiefly instances of genius, is a stout believer in what he likes. Outside of that he must, as a rule, have acquired some special cultivation if his guidance is to be worth anything. In short, the artist, as artist, is wofully given to narrow and prejudiced views. He is, moreover, obsessed by technique and there the layman, confessedly ignorant, is ever ready to behave as though by the mere utterance of the sacrosanct word, the ground had been cut from under his feet. I revert here to my "impenetrable mysteries." Technique, or rather a great artist's possession and exploitation of it, is one of them. Consider, for example, how personal it is, how it expresses in even the most fleeting touch the character of a Michael Angelo or a Velasquez, a Holbein or a Chardin. But in the appreciation of art there are times for technique as there are times for other things. It is good to savor an artist's way of painting, or of modelling, just for its own sake. There lies, indeed, one of the joys of life

amongst works of art. But in the final perspective technique is to be apprehended not alone with connoisseurship, but, as I cannot too often say, with common sense.

Technique, I think, may be not unfairly described as just the decency of the artistic life. It is so in all the other arts and there is no reason why it should not be so in painting and sculpture. I am well aware of the immeasurable importance of technique. It is the testimony of the ages that the poet, putting the right word in the right place, is doing something near to the divine. But I assert also that the true poet, doing this, knows that he is only doing what is expected of him, what is required by his own self-respect. Literary men make much of Flaubert's martyrdom to his style. Mr. James talks somewhere about his "thin sheets of beaten gold." That is very pretty, but Flaubert, with his *mot juste*, is a little like the legendary Briton with his constantly assertive tub. Civilized people take these things for granted. One bathes and shaves in the morning to satisfy an innate sense of cleanliness. On going forth one does not ask the first friend he meets to notice that his face is clean, bragging that, as the possessor of a shaving conscience, he has raised himself above his fellows. Pugilists, I am told, go clean-shaven. Flaubert, coming up to Paris with his loud voice and his style of the mediæval saint, ready to go to the stake for a comma, really brought with him something of the

complacency of the provincial. Maupassant and the rest thought they were listening to a new gospel when he told them that two and two made four and that the writing man must know his trade. It was like telling a plumber that a clean-wiped joint could only be made with the art of a Cellini and that when he had made it he was the equal of Michael Angelo. There was nothing original about this propaganda. Its partisans forgot that every artist worth his salt has done his work over and over again until he has done it right. No one has hysterics over Beethoven's sketch-books; the care with which he built up a symphony simply showed that he knew his trade. Genius leaves the *mot juste* to take care of itself, or, seeking it with blood and tears, does so out of a sense of honor which disdains applause for mere dexterity. But all this, of course, to the average artist to-day, is heresy.

Just why he has made technique his fetich it is difficult to say. The history of the past throws no light on that problem, for the old master, working miracles with technique, nevertheless took technique in his stride. But the plight of the modern is explained to some extent, I think, by the nature of his training, his segregation in great numbers under the direction of organized schools and his consequent absorption in formulas. Inevitably the latter take on, for him, a talismanic significance, and he thinks he has suffered a mystical laying on of hands when

he has only been drilled in a set of calisthenics. He gets professionalized and there is no process more deadening. I remember having a letter some years ago from one of the most brilliant of contemporary English writers, a type of truly creative imagination. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that the whole business lies in the success with which the author remains an amateur — that's the difference between the writer and the painter — able to preserve his simplicity, his sense of wonder and magic, the delight he has in the wagging of his pen and the zest with which he will explore the recesses of his own head. Professionalism rubs all that out of one desperately soon." There can be no question that it rubs "all that" out of scores, hundreds, I might even say thousands, of artists. It makes them nervously self-conscious, fearful of doing this, eager to do that, and in both cases yielding not to personal, thought-out conviction, but to the iron rule of their guild. The guild idea has its virtues, only, like scientific criticism, it can be overdone, and its most vicious effects are those revealed not so much in specific deeds as in a frame of mind. The professionalized artist, proudly shutting the layman out from his mystery and doing so on purely technical grounds, narrows the whole charming business of art down to a pin-point. He destroys the bonds of sympathy that should unite him with his public and incidentally arrests his own sensitiveness, diminishes his own power of vision. He and the lay-

man, failing to get together, talk as if some fires of Pentecost were needed to make them both free of the same language. Each would understand the other a little better, and would be ready to throw a lot of misunderstanding onto the rubbish heap, if only they would both use a little common sense and look at art as a wholesome, human thing.

It is common sense that will bring the subject down from the clouds and keep the great work of art before us as the creation of a man, not of a demigod. And this common sense might come into play more frequently if in the study of the history of art less attention were given to abstruse, metaphysical phenomena and more to the prosaic facts of biography. It is a singular point, and one not inaptly to be emphasized here, that the men by whom the modern painter swears were all peculiarly human creatures, who interested themselves in familiar life, and, to be frank, put on no airs. They were not foolish about technique. Neither is Degas to-day, any more than those masters of the past whose gifts of technique he shares. He is too busy, as they were, establishing all the elements in a work of art in a perfect equilibrium. It is no one factor in the making of a work of art that should be singled out and put in the foreground. It is unity that gives the stamp of successful genius. The failure to recognize this explains the puerility of those debates which occasionally arise on the relation of subject to technique. It is a part of the whole.

To carry to its logical conclusion the usual argument against the subject picture would be to accept the proposition that pure color, with no form at all, constitutes a picture. Walter Pater deftly touches the problem in his familiar saying about "the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form." But I must cite a fuller contribution, made by one who is a literary man, it is true, but whose sympathy for art, whose passion for technique as technique, will hardly be challenged. I mean Mr. James. In an old essay of his on Baudelaire he has this cogent passage:

> To deny the relevancy of subject-matter and the importance of the moral quality of a work of art strikes us as, in two words, very childish. We do not know what the great moralists would say about the matter — they would probably treat it very good-humouredly; but that is not the question. There is very little doubt what the great artists would say. People of that temper feel that the whole thinking man is one, and that to count out the moral element in one's appreciation of an artistic total is exactly as sane as it would be (if the total were a poem) to eliminate all the words in three syllables, or to consider only such portions of it as had been written by candlelight. The crudity of sentiment of the advocates of "art for art" is often a striking example of the fact that a great deal of what is called culture may fail to dissipate a well-seated provincialism of spirit. They talk of morality as Miss Edgeworth's infantine heroes and heroines talk of "physic" — they allude to its being put into and kept out of a work of art, put into and kept out of one's appreciation of the same, as if it were a coloured fluid kept in a big-labelled bottle in some mysterious intellec-

tual closet. It is in reality simply a part of the essential richness of inspiration — it has nothing to do with the artistic process and it has everything to do with the artistic effect. The more a work of art feels it at its source, the richer it is; the less it feels it, the poorer it is.

Surely this is obvious and unanswerable. And is it the view of fine-drawn, supersubtle philosophy? It is rather, I think, the view of common sense. It makes, moreover, for that natural and essentially social conception of art which in the last resort is the only conception that endures. I have myself an unquenchable interest in technique. I never can ignore it in my study of art and on occasion, as perhaps the reader of this volume will discover, it seems to me a subject not merely excusing but irresistibly demanding analysis for its own sake. But one may talk and write indefinitely in praise of technique and still be bound to return to the larger idea of art which it is my purpose to urge, to the beauty, woven of many threads, which is made not by technicians for their comrades but by men for mankind. I spoke just now of the commonplaces of biography and how necessary they are to check the swelling ardors of both artist and critic. They do this because they help us to see things as they are.

A dip into the biography of Leonardo da Vinci may be of some service. He has been the cause of floods of fine writing. Shoals of enthusiasts, from Gautier down, have been rapt in dithyrambic ecstasy before

the "Mona Lisa" and they have all had their say about that lady's enigmatic smile. The smile must have meant a great deal to the master, for he gave it incessant study. In the drawings of heads which are among our most precious souvenirs of Leonardo we find him forever weaving a spell about the lips of his model. Something very sweet and evanescent lies there, something so subtle as to be past finding out, and it belongs, one feels, to the secret recesses of his genius. The key to that smile, if we had it, would unlock his heart and aid us incalculably in the discovery of what manner of man he was. But now let us look for a moment into Leonardo's workshop and watch him amongst his apprentices. Like every master of the Renaissance he held a more or less paternal relation to the lads in his care. Besides teaching them how to be artists he looked after their health, comfort, and morals. Here is what he writes about one of the apprentices in his *bottega:*

> Giacomo came to live with me on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, 1490. He was ten years old. The second day I ordered two shirts, a pair of hose, and a doublet for him. When I put aside the money to pay for these things he took it out of my purse. I was never able to make him confess the robbery, although I was certain of it. A thieving, lying, pig-headed glutton.

The episode would seem, of course, to have nothing whatever to do with Leonardo's art — until one stops to think of what it brings back to us across the ages.

Not an incredible Olympian, lifting masterpieces out of the vasty deep by the waving of a wand, but a very mortal old Italian, taking the day's work, with its practical duties and its petty vexations, in a simple, man-like mood. The colossal genius was also a man like ourselves. Track him through all the documentary and other evidence that we possess and you will find him invariably tinctured with our common humanity. He drew Mona Lisa's smile and he painted that "Last Supper" at Milan which even in ruins is a work of supernatural beauty. And when Baroncelli, the conspirator, was hanged in Florence, Leonardo sketched him at the rope's end. When he was not dreamily delineating the heads of angelically lovely women he was studying with a strong psychological solicitude the monstrous physiognomies of old witches and beggars. He did not dip his brush into earthquake and eclipse; he dipped it into life, and was content to speak to men as to his fellows. There is a famous letter of his in which he offers his services to the Duke of Milan, and in it he tells how he can make portable bridges to be used in war, how he can devise bombs which he says are "proper for throwing showers of small missiles, and with the smoke thereof causing great terror to the enemy, to his imminent loss and confusion." Turn from the "Last Supper" and go to the old Castello. Look up at the ceiling which has been restored from Leonardo's design. He takes Il Moro's device, the mulberry tree, and makes

a pattern of interlaced boughs and leafage incomparable as a piece of formal decoration. A sense of mathematics as well as a sense of beauty went to the creation of this design. The ceiling, like the other examples I have cited and a multitude of others available in his biography, may be taken as pointing to the universality of his genius. But these things also point to the unassuming resourcefulness of a practical man, jealous, as we know, of his private thoughts and dreams; but living his life on workable terms with the people about him. When all is said, the artist really cannot afford to do anything else.

This is the unimpeachable testimony of the past. Leonardo is typical of European art in his close contact with the life of his period, and it is interesting to observe in passing that his spirit is likewise traceable in Oriental antiquity. One reason why Japanese art, which has grown so popular in this country, is yet only partially comprehended here, is that Whistler and other noted pioneers in the appreciation of it made a false start, fastening upon the decorative motive and letting everything else go by the board. Okakura, in his "Ideals of The East," makes short work of the perfervid zeal which would erect Hokusai and the other masters of the print into towering portents. "Those charmingly colored wood-cuts," he says, "full of vigor and versatility, stand apart from the main line of development of Japanese art." The inros, sword guards, and objects in lacquer of which

we make so much he stigmatizes as playthings, and, as such, "no embodiment of national fervor, in which all true art exists." He tells how in ancient China "painting was held in esteem for its inculcation of the practice of virtue," and in another passage he describes the history of Japanese art as "the history of Asiatic ideals, the beach where each successive wave of Eastern thought has left its sand-ripple as it beat against the national consciousness." I see in that poetically suggestive figure no impracticable affirmation of an overwrought, too metaphysical, idealism. On the contrary, Okakura's appeal is simply to common sense. He realizes, as every one must realize who thinks disinterestedly on the subject, that "national fervor" has a status in art fully equal to that of paint.

The French have some notion of this but elsewhere in modern art the principle makes slow headway. In very recent years, and especially since the development of mural decoration in this country, we have begun to make a little more of the themes in our own history, a history abounding in picturesqueness from Columbus down, but we are still handicapped by a droll provincialism. The statue of an Indian used to be called the youthful sin of every American sculptor. Though we have got over that there is much still to be learned. Our forefathers fought two great wars but we have had very gradually to be lured into painting them, because they did not wear the cos-

tumes of mediæval Europe. We protest against the frock coat and other details in contemporary dress but Velasquez was not afraid of the tailor of his time. Think of the long, commonplace garment worn by his "Don Diego del Corral," or, even better, of the grotesque farthingales worn by his Infantas! When we rave, as Whistler and hosts of other artists have raved, over what he did with those grim problems of his, do we give a moment's thought to questions of costume? Do we worry over the out-of-date flounces and hats in the pictures of Alfred Stevens, when we are delighting in his art? We reject our past on the high-sounding pretext that we must live in the present and then we think that we are living in the present when we shut our eyes to its real stuff and pose the matinee girl in our studios. We would make the world of art over into something totally unlike the world of life. "By the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing!" Matthew Arnold was thinking only of a matter of hideous nomenclature; but the citation may stand, for the sake of the "poor thing." There were Wraggs, in that sense, in Greece, and Phidias looked at them, we may be quite sure. That he did not actually portray them is a retort which the enemy might be rash enough to proffer, but it will not do. Common sense replies that all is fish that comes to the artist's net, that the condition on which he succeeds is that he keep his sympathies wide open, responsive to every human emotion.

The proof, if proof be needed, is supplied by a multitude of examples. I have cited perhaps more than is necessary of these, yet I am tempted to add another. Every one remembers the kind of pictures that David used to paint in his cold, eighteenth-century manner. Taking a classical subject and working it out with the aid of innumerable figures and studio properties, he would pile it all up as upon a scaffold and leave it a frigid, hollow fabric of artificiality. But outside that academic workshop of his, the Revolution was turning France upside down and occasionally he would look out of the window. In a few hastily scratched lines he thus drew Marie Antoinette as she sat in the tumbrel on the way to the guillotine, and as he did so something happened to David. Human emotion crept in and stirred the man's soul. There is more of power, there is more of life, there is more of true artistic eloquence in that little sketch that he made of the Queen going to her death than there is in all his classical compositions put together. I would not exaggerate the significance of that incident. Human emotion does not automatically produce a great work of art and neither do I ask the reader to believe that common sense will automatically make him free of those mysteries from which we took our point of departure. But I think he will admit that the beneficial reaction of life upon art, which I have illustrated in David and others, is no fanciful speculation, but one of the truths of human history which we may

all successfully test for ourselves in what goes on about us. In advocating the use of common sense in the study of art I am only urging the reader to keep his head and his sense of humor, to be wary of the esoteric qualities commended to him by the pundit of whatever artistic or critical persuasion, to look at a work of art in a natural human way, with an open mind. Let prejudice and pedantry go hang. Beauty is all. And is it not the enjoyment of beauty that we are all driving at?

II

Ingres: A Pilgrimage to Montauban

II

INGRES: A PILGRIMAGE TO MONTAUBAN

For those who revere the name of Ingres, the little town of Montauban, in the southwest of France, is a shrine. There he was born in 1780, and there, since his death, in 1867, his collections have been assembled, including a vast number of his works and many souvenirs of a personal character. I cannot count the times that I have pored over the map and speculated as to how I might make a pilgrimage to the spot, but it always seemed very remote from Paris, and once, when I was near enough, at Marseilles, to make the journey, other plans bore me away to Rome. Montauban was forever receding into the distance, but as more and more it appeared inaccessible the desire to go there only grew the stronger. In a recent winter, travelling down from Paris to Madrid, I found it hard to avoid turning off at Bordeaux to follow the Garonne past Agen and Moissac to where the Tarn hurries beneath the walls that I longed to see. I resisted this temptation and went on to the Prado, but even while I rested there, content among the masterpieces of Velasquez,

it was an ever present joy to have at the back of my mind a sense of the fact that Montauban was only postponed, to know that I should presently be sitting at the feet of Ingres.

I

The transition from the Spaniard to the Frenchman is easily made. It is always easy to pass from one great artist to another. There are many modern painters who can see only an impassable gulf between Velasquez and Ingres, but then there are others who are conscious of no gulf at all, a fact of which I was delightfully reminded when, on the road back into France, I paused at Bayonne. Léon Bonnat was born in that old Basque town, and to show his gratitude for the municipal aid that had enabled him to pursue his artistic studies in his youth he has given to his fellow citizens a rich collection of pictures, drawings, sculptures and other objects. This distinguished painter has all his life long had a passion for Velasquez, and has done much to foster appreciation and emulation of the master in France. But, like Degas, he also worships Ingres, and the Musée Bonnat contains some perfect souvenirs of the latter. Among the paintings there is a replica of the exquisite "Mme. Devauçay," one of the triumphs of the painter's earlier period in Rome. It is a study in black and yellow, almost Whistlerian in the purity

of its tones and the simple effectiveness of their arrangement. There is, by the way, a touching anecdote relating to this portrait. Many years after Ingres painted it an aged lady, shabbily dressed, called upon him in Paris. "You do not recognize me," she said, "and yet you have painted my portrait. But," she slowly added, with manifest embarrassment, "I was young then, and, they said, beautiful. I am Mme. Devauçay." She went on to explain that ill fortune had harassed her and that she needed, to her great regret, to sell the portrait he had made of her. Ingres was profoundly moved, and with characteristic energy found a purchaser for the painting.

Bonnat secured several other important replicas for his collection and he was even luckier in respect to the drawings, gathering together fifteen or twenty of these, among them several of the finest that Ingres ever produced. It was exciting to be in their presence, and thus to have a foretaste of what awaited me at Montauban; and the experience was repeated at Toulouse. In the museum there hangs one of the master's most famous compositions, the "Tu Marcellus eris," in which he figured Virgil as reading the sixth book of the Æneid to the Emperor Augustus. In substance and in form it illustrates the very essence of his genius as a classicist, and, though I suspect that it has suffered a little through the "restoring" intervention of some later hand, it has a notable significance in regard to his traits as a colorist. Color

was not by any means his *forte*, and there is a suggestive point made by the German critic who drew a parallel between the color of Ingres and the mathematically balanced chords in an Oriental rug. It would be well, however, for those who would dismiss his color out of hand to look first at the Toulouse picture. The flesh tints, it is true, are at once too hot and too dull, but in the draperies there are some fine tints of rose and yellow, and the cool but not hard grays which predominate in the work give it a surprising softness and depth. I was doubly glad to see this picture on the threshold of Montauban.

It is, figuratively speaking, but a step from Toulouse to Montauban, and the brief journey takes one swiftly from the present into the past. The city is large and prosperous, and, though it possesses many noble antiquities, its atmosphere is, on the whole, determined by the business activities of to-day. The town wears another aspect. According to the judicious Baedeker, its affairs are sound, and I assume, therefore, that its people are comfortable, but the physiognomy of Montauban is somewhat severe if not actually forbidding. It struck me as a page out of one of Balzac's studies of provincial life, a place of cheerless, incommunicative façades, of dispirited streets, ill-kempt and uninviting to a degree not altogether explained by the gray, wintry weather. There is scarce any architecture of interest in the place, the tower of the old Church of St. Jacques, the

double arcades around the Place Nationale and the great bridge across the Tarn being the sole monuments having any weight or picturesqueness. The ancient château of the Counts of Toulouse, which is now the Hôtel de Ville, has passed through many vicissitudes, and its present character, fixed in the seventeenth century, is in no wise impressive. One turns to the building only because it contains the Musée Ingres. Not alone in thus sheltering his works has the town sought to do honor to its great man. At one end of the Promenade des Carmes he has his monument, a colossal affair by Etex, one of his pupils. It is a seated figure in bronze, set against a relief reproducing the master's "Apotheosis of Homer." The portrait is tolerable. The background is beyond description inartistic and repellent. Hand on heart, I do not believe there is a more deplorable monument in all Europe. One regrets this the more because they gave M. Etex a glorious site. The view from the promenade sweeps the country for miles, and it is a lovely view, which in clear weather, it is said, includes the distant Pyrenees.

I found the museum locked and seemingly deserted, but from his retreat in a corner of the huge, silent courtyard I routed out the concierge, a terrific and explosive personage, accompanied by an infinitesimal and madly excited puppy. In an instant the noise in the place was deafening, and it was with difficulty that I learned that the museum was closed. I will

not pretend, however, that I felt at all discouraged, for there was, indeed, too much humor in the idea of ending my long pilgrimage just outside a locked door, so I sat down to play with the dog and give the concierge time to finish his roars. When he had at last lost his breath I told him how to go and find the conservator, and in a little while all the reverberations had died away, a lean and pensive *gardien* had turned up from nowhere, the doors had been opened and shut behind me and I had begun to realize my cherished wish.

As it turned out I was to suffer only the smallest shadow of a disappointment. There are not among the drawings as many of the finished portraits as I had expected to find. But there were enough of them, in all conscience, and besides there were thousands of those even more personal studies which show the draughtsman at his daily work, preparing for his exploits with the brush. There are numerous paintings also, renowned originals, and in certain cases where great canvases of his have not been available good copies have been substituted. In the room that is first entered, containing his portrait and partially embellished with decorations in relief made by his sculptor father, there is a glass-enclosed alcove where his desk and violin, the gold crown bestowed upon him in his old age, medals, manuscripts and other relics are brought together. The very spirit of the man fills these quiet old rooms. His whole career

is illustrated. Musing here, one follows him literally from his boyhood, amid the clash of Napoleonic developments, to those last days in the 60's when he carried himself in Paris like an ancient Roman Senator, and, as the late Alphonse Legros loved to remember, his entrance into the Ecole des Beaux-Arts caused all those present to rise bareheaded to greet him.

His life may be reconstructed with facility, for he has had more than one zealous biographer. The first, and in some ways still most authoritative memoir, was written by his friend, the Vicomte Henri Delaborde, whose book not only traverses the painter's life, but reproduces a voluminous series of his own notes and reflections, catalogues the works and adds a number of letters. It is curious that this precious volume, printed in 1870, has never passed into a new edition, and that copies of it are still to be had at the publisher's. One would have supposed that there would have been a demand sufficient to have exhausted several editions long ago. M. Boyer d'Agen has produced a good book, useful for the documents it contains, in his "Ingres d'après une correspondance inédite." Invaluable services have been rendered to the fame of the master by M. Henry Lapauze. Some years ago he published a monumental work on the drawings, accompanying his volume of text with a portfolio of six hundred facsimiles, and only last year he printed a copious and well-illustrated biography.

In "Le Roman d'amour de M. Ingres" he has told the rather cynical story of the painter's passing infatuation with Julie Forestier, and he has in preparation two volumes of the letters of Ingres, a volume of hitherto unpublished documents, and a descriptive catalogue of all the works. M. Lapauze, in short, has made Ingres his own, and in the process has put us all in his debt. But one must always turn, as I have said, to Delaborde, and there is one little book which is better worth having than all the rest. This is "L'Atelier d'Ingres," the collection of souvenirs which Amaury-Duval, one of his pupils, published in 1878. Amaury, as he preferred to call himself in his own pages, was a disciple no less observant than loving, and through his tenderly sympathetic descriptions and anecdotes we are brought close not only to the painter but to the man.

II

As a child at Montauban Ingres felt within him the stirrings of his destiny. He was only twelve when he saw by accident some copies after Raphael and some fragments of antique sculpture. He fell upon them, as he was wont to say, just as a cat falls upon its prey. Delaborde tells, too, how the lad used to weep with admiration as he shared with his violin in the performance of some of Gluck's music, when he earned his bread in the orchestra of the theatre at

Toulouse. Two arts claimed him in his youth, but he and his father both appear to have realized soon enough that he was meant to be a painter and not a musician. He was, no doubt, a fairly competent violinist. As a boy he won applause at Toulouse with a concerto of Viotti's, and later he liked to recall that he had played the second violin part in the Beethoven quartets organized by Paganini during his sojourn at Rome.* But it is to be gathered from Amaury that Ingres never exaggerated his musical proficiency. That, as a draughtsman, he had the root of the matter in him he showed when he was only nine years old. M. Lapauze has in his collection a drawing, from the cast, that Ingres made then, a drawing astonishingly good for one so young; and so far as one may infer from the earliest relics at Montauban his hand thenceforth never faltered. His father gave him his first training, and then sent him, at the age of twelve, to study under Roques, at Toulouse. He also had at this time some instruction from Briant, a landscapist, remembered not so much for his works as for his energy in saving many of the artistic treasures of Toulouse from the vandalism of '93. The student made rapid progress. At sixteen

* It is interesting to compare the drawing that he made of the virtuoso with the portrait painted by Delacroix. There is more mystery, more of the bizarre thrill of one of Paganini's conjuring performances, in the romanticist's "temperamental" impression than there is in the cool linear study by Ingres; but it is by the latter that one would be inclined to swear, on the point of truth, and it is, besides, a very beautiful thing.

he was on his way to Paris, where he entered the atelier of David, and in five years he had won the Prix de Rome. Technically he was then one of the best-equipped young artists of his time, and already he had begun to think for himself.

Those were long, long thoughts of his. David never had a more loyal pupil, but when Ingres settled down in Rome, young, ambitious and happy, his artistic character was as wax to receive the impress of Raphael's genius, and Raphael, he felt in his soul, was an immeasurably greater man than David. Between the two influences he proceeded to beat out a style of his own, compounded of Greek idealism and the truth of nature as he saw it. If we are to believe his detractors, and he has had many of them, he froze these elements into a formula; but when you come really to trace his familiar walk and demeanor you find it impossible to regard him as an artist who lived by any given set of rules, devised by himself or by anybody else. He lived, rather, by instinct, by enthusiasm, and both were for beauty and the world well lost. He had, of course, his theories, his principles, but it is, I think, misleading to take them too seriously. Beauty, he liked to say, as so many others have said before him, resides in truth, but when truth confronted him in an ugly shape he turned his head away. There was nothing in him of that scientific passion for the exact fact which has been so widely developed in modern art since his day. He knew all the

muscles in the human body, but it was his boast that he did not know any of them by name, and this nice distinction between artistic and anatomical authority was very characteristic. "In the construction of a figure," he would say to his pupils, "do not proceed bit by bit, but build it up at a stroke; get the ensemble." And again: "Draw purely, but with largeness. Purity and largeness, *voilà le dessin, voilà l'art.*" Once he was prevailed upon to authorize the purchase of a skeleton for the studio used by his pupils. Amaury told his comrades that he would give them fifteen days to retain their "property," but by the end of the first week Ingres had had the abhorrent thing thrown out.

That last episode might seem to suggest an incurable unwillingness to come to close quarters with nature, and there are sayings of his which nominally point to a narrow, arbitrary conception of truth. "In the images of man in art," he says, "repose is the first beauty of the body, just as in life wisdom is the highest expression of the soul." He chose his subjects accordingly. But that surely was his right, and having made his choice he proceeded on the hypothesis that he could not be too faithful to the actual object before his eyes. An old pupil of his, one Granger, was looking at the "Œdipus," and, recognizing the model, remarked that it seemed to him an idealized portrait. Ingres nearly lost his temper. "You may think what you like," he said, "but it is my effort to

copy my model as a very humble servant and not to idealize it." "Idealized or not, it is very beautiful," retorted Granger, and there we have the art of Ingres in a nutshell. Others may see what he could not or would not see himself, that his sense of beauty irresistibly governed him. Whether he could not or would not, it was idle to argue with him. "He was incapable of discussion," says Amaury, and the remark brings up a fact which is not perhaps generally appreciated. The classic calm pervading his work and the gravely dignified figure that Ingres presented to the world, especially in his later Parisian years, have withdrawn attention from the southern passion of his nature. He was a true Montalbanais, fiery, impatient, and having small use for consistency or logic. Over and over again Amaury illustrates the tempestuous habit of his master when contradicted or in any way annoyed. When the conversation took a turn distasteful to him he would move uneasily in his chair and beat with his fingers on the table. At dinner one night M. Thiers undertook to develop the thesis that the Madonnas of Raphael constituted his chief title to fame. "I would give them all," violently exclaimed Ingres, "yes, monsieur, all of them, for a fragment of the 'Disputà' or of the 'School of Athens' or of the 'Parnassus,'" and it was with difficulty that his outraged temper could be soothed.

That volcanic way of his was often harmless enough. There was the case of the industrious young Lefèvre,

who was very poor and suddenly absented himself from the studio because he was in arrears with the *massier*. He had been missed for two whole months when Ingres met him on the Pont des Arts and wormed the truth out of him. "What, monsieur," he exclaimed, "would you insult me? Have I given you the right to speak to me in this manner? Am I a shopkeeper? Do I sell my counsel? Monsieur, you will come to-morrow to the studio or I shall consider your conduct as a personal insult. Never let this question arise between us again." But against this noble wrath it is undeniable that we have to set many an instance of almost incredible intolerance. "You are my pupils," he would say to Amaury and the rest, "and in consequence my friends. You would not salute one of my enemies if you passed him in the street. Turn then from Rubens when you pass him in the museums, because if you do not do so you are treacherous to my teaching and to me." When he found Delacroix in a room containing one of his pictures he could hardly wait for the hated Romanticist to leave, so that he might open the window and purify the air. It is pathetic and a little amusing to read the references to him in Delacroix's journal. The earliest of them is favorable enough. He goes to the Luxembourg and sees there a picture, probably the "Roger délivrant Angélique," and notes simply "*Ingres charmant.*" But Delacroix got over that. The time came when he could say of an exhibition of his

rival's work that "it is the complete expression of an incomplete intelligence." Every biographer of Ingres finds it necessary to apologize for his attitude toward Delacroix, just as every biographer of Delacroix seeks to explain away his observations on Ingres.

There is, however, a profitable suggestion in that remark of Delacroix's about "intelligence." Ingres painted the kind of picture with which one not unnaturally associates ideas of intelligence, of reason, of carefully pondered construction. He was, emphatically, a man who mixed brains with his colors. But it is even more important to remember that a pictorial idea, with Ingres, as with Delacroix, stands for a jet of emotion. He was not a native of Montauban for nothing. Impulse, a sudden and swift inspiration, the conviction whose springs cannot be analyzed — these things were forever influencing his work. Take, for example, that masterly portrait of M. Bertin in the Louvre which ranks among his highest achievements. I have heard it contemned by no less a person than Whistler, who met my enthusiasm for it with the round assertion that it was no better than a figure by Meissonier, laboriously and nervelessly built up inch by inch, with every button on the coat in the right place, but with no life left in it. Now, as a matter of fact, Ingres did work like a slave on a portrait of Bertin. The latter, telling Amaury of the master's despair through sitting after sitting, said, "He weeps and I pass my time consoling him." At

Montauban there are a number of drawings showing the false and heartbreaking steps he took toward his goal. But when he reached that goal it was by a leap. One night at dinner he observed Bertin in the pose that we know. "Come and sit to-morrow," he whispered as they parted; "your portrait is made," and the next day, abandoning all that had been previously done, he attacked his canvas with the certainty of success. In less than a month the portrait was finished. He could take infinite pains. He recognized his mistakes when he made them, crying like a child as he cleaned them off the canvas and started again; but at bottom it was an affair of vision, not of hand, that thus delayed him. He had to *see* his subject in the right way. So far as mere dexterity went, Ingres could work miracles. Horace Vernet used to say to those who thought that he painted with rapidity that they ought to see Ingres at work. Beside him Vernet felt that he was no better than a tortoise.

One measure of his greatness is accessible in the resolution with which he refused to presume upon his facility. Master of line that he was, he insisted upon remaining its master. No technical resource would ever be brought by him into the foreground. "Touch," of which some of his contemporaries were prone to make so much, struck him as only an abuse of execution, a quality belonging to false talents, to false artists, who painted pictures merely to show

their own adroitness. To magnify the function of "touch" was, he maintained, to draw attention from the object represented to the technical process used in representing it, to make more of the painter's hand than of his thought. Flippant cleverness he merely loathed, and woe betide the pupil who sought "*le chic*." The mere utterance of that phrase in his hearing was likely to provoke a storm. "*Les chefs-d'œuvre*," he would say, "are not made to dazzle. They are made to persuade, to convince, to enter into us through the pores." Well might he say in that sentence of his which has been quoted, perhaps, more than any other, "*Le dessin est la probité de l'art*." If he said this as a draughtsman he said it also as an artist in the fullest, most comprehensive sense of the term. It is of his rectitude that one is always thinking in the museum at Montauban. You do not miss there the movement which he rejects in that saying I have cited about the value of repose in art. Neither do you miss anything in the nature of "touch." All is serene and beautiful, and the dignity of Ingres, his smooth, pure surfaces, like his astounding draughtsmanship, seem just the right and natural expression of a great original genius.

III

I found it very interesting to follow the construction of some of his pictures through the sheaves of

studies made for them. Many of these are concentrated in portfolios, which somehow makes it the more illuminating to study them. Turning them about and about, handling them at leisure, they seem to exhale his mood, to bring back in some mysterious manner the hours of patient and ardent labor which was not labor, after all, but the happy exercise of a gift. Amid these warm personal souvenirs the very last shreds of any pedantry that may have appeared to cling to Ingres seem to fall away. I make no pretence of describing the thousands of drawings in the museum. What impressed me about the mass was the strain of beauty, of sheer beauty, running through it. In drawing after drawing I could read the artist's conscientious search after truth, his tireless interrogation of form, his loving research into the structure of a hand, the bend in a leg, the play of a muscle. But never was I conscious of the quest for truth alone. Every touch recording a fact seemed also to recapture some fleeting trait of beauty, to envelop form in an exquisite, linear grace. More than ever, as it seemed to me, I could appreciate the force of that profession of faith which Ingres wrote when he was nearing his prime: "I am for the arts what I have always been. Age and reflection have, I hope, confirmed my taste without diminishing its warmth. My adorations remain what they have always been, Raphael and his century, the ancients and, above all, the divine Greeks. In music, Gluck, Mozart and

Haydn. My library is composed of a score of immortal volumes. With all this life is full of charm."

He preserved down to the end that candid, well-poised faith, and he had his reward. When as a youth he won the Prix de Rome, his sojourn in Italy developed some trials. He stayed on, unwilling to tear himself away from Raphael, and though he was painting masterpieces he found it next to impossible to earn a living. That was the period of the innumerable little portraits, the drawings made for sixty francs which are now fought for by the collectors. Madeleine Chapelle, his first wife, whom he married at that time, used afterward to tell of the straits to which they had been reduced. When he was painting "The Vow of Louis XIII" there was not money in the house to buy a ladder on which to work at the upper part of the picture, and they were obliged to do the best they could, piling one bit of furniture upon another. But at that very moment Ingres had the courage to refuse a commission to go to England and draw more portraits, a commission which would have paid him well, and the gods confirmed the decision of the distracted pair. In Paris this picture made a tremendous success, and carried Ingres to fortune. Thenceforth his course was clear. The romanticist might rave, but Ingres was secure. He throve in Paris until he returned to Rome to take Vernet's place at the head of the Villa Medici, and every day, as time wore on, his position in Italy and

at home in France was that of a kind of demigod. I have already quoted the reminiscence of Legros, showing the veneration in which Ingres was ultimately held. This veneration ran through many of the studios, but decidedly not through them all. There were artists aplenty to take their cue from Delacroix, and in the world at large there were other malcontents. The late John La Farge, who was a young man in Paris in the 60's, used to tell me how bitter was the feud between the two camps, that of Ingres and that of Delacroix, and how Chassériau had infuriated the former by breaking away from his tradition and seeking an independent path. There was much wild talk to and fro, there were sayings that were full of passion and of malice, and there were others that were only witty and gay. Among these last there was one by Laurent Jan which it is worth while to recall. This ingenious *homme d'esprit* found an anagram for the painter's name, turning Ingres into *engris*. It was a clever stroke, and, as Amaury admits, "in France a thing wittily said has soon the force of a law," but, as he adds, though this was amusing it was no more than that.

Ingres was not a colorist, he never pretended to be one, and in his remarks on the subject it is plain that he had not been initiated into its mysteries. It is prettily said that one should consult the flowers to find good tints for draperies, but the secret of his weakness lies in that very counsel, for it points to

an arbitrary mode of procedure. Studying his work in color at Montauban, the most important of the paintings in the museum, the large "Jesus Among the Doctors," and his picture in the sacristy of the Cathedral, that "Vow of Louis XIII" which has been already mentioned, I found what I had always found in his pictures at Paris and in divers provincial museums, that he was curiously indifferent to the play of light and the absorption of light by objects in nature. The evidence at Montauban, and at Dampierre, that he had his moments of insight into the secret of landscape, is not weighty enough to suggest that he was even dimly on the track of those discoveries in light-saturated color which the Impressionists were to make. On the other hand, as I have noted in regard to the beautiful picture at Toulouse, the flat tints of Ingres are not really as hard or as opaque as they seem, and, above all, they are very pure and wonderfully harmonized. There is a superb glow in the upper and lighter portion of "The Vow of Louis XIII," a golden glow which for a moment inclines you to think that the art of Ingres had indeed its sensuous aspect. And yet it would be idle to say that this or any other painting by him has the luminous quality which belongs to color in its best estate, the transparent depths, the subtle modulations, which make color in its penetrating appeal akin to music. No, it is vain to look in Ingres for what, flatly, is not there. No man can add a cubit

to his stature, and Ingres, for all his greatness, was deprived of one prodigiously important resource. "*Le dessin comprend tout*," he says, "*excepté la teinte*," and there is, perhaps, an unconscious pathos in the exception that he admits. I felt its force, even under the spell of Montauban. But genius is a mysteriously potent thing. In those still rooms, *consacré*, as his countrymen would say, by illustrious achievement, it seemed fitting to murmur only those proud words of his, "*Le dessin comprend tout.*"

III

The Magic of Mere Paint

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III

THE MAGIC OF MERE PAINT

I

THE OLD TRADITION AND THE NEW

THERE are two great portraits in Europe which because of the suggestive differences between them I have often found it interesting to think of together. One is the "Cardinal Mezzarota" of Mantegna, at Berlin, and the other is the "Æsop" of Velasquez, at Madrid. The period of time that divides them, a period of more than a hundred and fifty years, is as nothing to the gulf that separates them in the matter of method. All manner of developments have to be reckoned with in the long transition from the studio of the Italian to that of the Spaniard. But it is not to traverse these through their infinite ramifications that I would consider the two portraits in question side by side. It is, rather, for the reason that comparison of them, looking simply to the heads, affords an opportunity, peculiarly convenient, amusing, and fruitful, for an exposition of what I may call the genius of pigment.

If you ask an artist to tell you which of the old masters, in his opinion, *knew how to paint*, he will name, at the outside, only four or five, and perhaps not so many. Ask him to explain why he thus restricts his list, and he will say that the old masters used, in the main, a method totally different from our own; that only a scant handful of them treated pigment with a true feeling for its character as pigment. The layman has to be on his guard in these matters. He has to remember that there are methods and methods, and that the method of the Florentines, for example, was just as valid, in its way, as that of Velasquez or that of Rembrandt. But the difference remains and there is nothing more profitable than to grasp its exact significance. We may do so the more readily, I think, if, in contrasting these two portraits, we study their technical aspects with reference to the broad experience of each of the painters concerned.

Mantegna, trained in the midst of Squarcione's collection of classical marbles, based his treatment of form on principles of sculpture. His grand portrait of the Cardinal is very like a carven bust out of antiquity. Modelled with a stern feeling for plastic simplicity, superbly drawn, synthesized with an extraordinarily austere power, it seems of scarcely any consequence that the artist should have introduced into his color scheme a plangent note of red. What, after all, is color to him? Form is what he cares for in this instance and it is the form of a statue. But it

is not upon the sacrifice of color that I wish to dwell, for as a matter of fact Mantegna shows elsewhere that to color, as color, he was not by any means indifferent. The sacrifice I have more particularly in mind is the unconscious one of that quality which goes with true *painted* color. There is the pivot on which our problem turns. There was color in European art long before Velasquez came into view, but it was not the color of pigment used for its own sake. The paintings of the Van Eycks glow like jewels or enamels, but that is precisely what distinguishes them for the purposes of this inquiry; they have nothing to tell us about the genius of paint as the modern painter understands it.

Turn now to the "Æsop" and to the frame of mind in which Velasquez painted it. He had begun his career as an artist in his *bodegones*, observing everyday types in the taverns and streets of Seville. There were no coldly gleaming marbles in his pupilage, to fix his eye, as Mantegna's had been fixed, upon lovely but still opaque surfaces. He saw men, not statues, and he saw them as they were. The "Æsop," done when he had got well into his stride, perfectly illustrates the inevitable result of such observation. All is changed from Mantegna's Greek or at least Roman generalization. The Spanish head comes out of the canvas a living thing. The skin is drawn over the bones as it is drawn in nature. All its little ridges and inequalities, all the marvel of its texture, are

there. The blood is at work. It is a porous, sensitive integument, there are nerves at work in it, too, and it is full of color. Beside this thing of flesh the Mantegna, masterpiece as it is, is also a thing of wood. Now a partial explanation of the Spanish painter's superiority might be offered in two words, life and light. His more human point of view I have sufficiently indicated. I may illustrate what light did for him by reference to a familiar open-air phenomenon. Look at the forequarters of a horse in full sunshine, when the thick hair is saturated in light, and note how, when the animal moves a muscle to dislodge a fly, there goes a wonderful ripple not simply of light and shade but of many tones of color across the body. Such hints as these Velasquez was forever reckoning with and something analogous to the subtle, richly charged effect I have just described passed into his work. But while I make much of the difference between his starting-point and Mantegna's, between his interest in life and the Italian's interest in sculpture, the great point at issue is his possession of what the earlier master lacked, an instinct for the magic lying in mere paint. The historic experiments in the Low Countries and in Venice, which had opened to European art a new world of color, had disclosed everything save that one secret. The men who afterward arose to conquer it took liberties which would have shocked the Netherlandish and Italian Primitives, treating their surfaces often with a roughness

which would have seemed to the latter a violation of all the amenities. But, paradoxically, their ruthless abandonment of the old pure and suave tradition meant, instead of irreverence, a new respect for the instruments of artistic expression. Using paint with a deeper, livelier consciousness of its intrinsic qualities, bringing its individuality, so to say, into the foreground, they extorted from it a beauty which we need not call greater than that achieved before them, but which we must certainly recognize as wholly different, wholly new. It is to that difference that the modern artist trusts himself when, as I noted at the beginning, he draws up so modest a list of the painters who knew how to paint. It is a little absurd that he should be so grudging and yet one can realize just how he feels. Modern painting, the world in which he lives, has been enormously influenced by the principle which we have been discussing, and then the great outstanding exemplars of it happen to be types of such supreme artistic strength. Of Velasquez I have spoken at some length elsewhere in this volume but there are two or three others whose careers may be briefly traversed in the present essay.

II

REMBRANDT

They are the more interesting, I like to maintain, according as we survey them both as masters of tech-

nique and as men swayed by the common circumstances of human life. Rembrandt passed through the world not only that thousands of artists might have to-day a better understanding of the resources of their craft but that the truth might prevail in art. The story of his life is not an affair of esoteric aloofness from the world, of technique enveloped in an hermetically closed studio, but of prosaic effort. This miller's son was born in a comfortable house on the ramparts of Leyden on July 15, 1606. His parents were in easy circumstances; they appear to have been kindly, sympathetic folk, quick to understand the ambition which their son disclosed at an early age. He experienced none of the usual difficulties when once he had made his choice of a career. The miller and his wife saw no reason why they should compel the lad to study Latin when his heart was set on handling the brush. They released him from school when he was still in his teens, to enter the studio of Swanenburch, and after three years under that mediocre painter of Biblical and historical compositions they were content to let him leave their home and proceed to Amsterdam, where better instruction was available. He chose for his master Pieter Lastman, who had visited Rome and had brought back with him a Dutchman's version of the classical tradition, which is to say, a mode of painting more interesting to his contemporaries than it is to us. Rembrandt, a man in advance of his time, was not long in ex-

hausting all that his fashionable master had to teach him. By the time he was eighteen he was ready to return to Leyden, there, in the words of one of his biographers, "to study and practise painting alone, in his own fashion."

His art was founded upon nature, upon truth. From the beginning he tried most of all to make his picture look like the object placed before him, and the people for whom he labored were just the people to encourage his habit. The prosperous burghers of Holland were simple-minded souls, who kept their eyes upon the fact and expected the painter to do likewise. They kept him busy, too, making their portraits, and the well-trained artist was assured of his living as was the mason or the cabinet-maker. I purposely use this homely comparison because, in thinking of Rembrandt, it is important to think of him as working with his feet firm-fixed upon the ground, called upon to paint human beings in a simple, straightforward fashion, and qualified by birth, by breeding, and by his whole natural impulse to enter into the spirit of his surroundings, and execute his task in harmony with them. His time was ripe for him, and he was ripe for his time. In saying that he was a born draughtsman we credit him with a gift which he shared with other men; and indeed, in certain other broad characteristics, he was very much a man of his period. Both in his tonality and in the simplicity of his light and shade, he followed the gen-

eral tendency of his contemporaries in Holland. But what he brought to his work, even as a young man, that was peculiarly his own, was an extraordinary authority in the fusion of draughtsmanship, color, and light and shade into a form of art marked by great feeling for character, great strength of style, and a notable instinct for pigment.

He began his studies in portraiture by making portraits of himself, and there is a startling maturity in these first efforts of his brush. There is a portrait of Rembrandt, painted by himself, in the museum at The Hague, which dates from about 1629 or 1630, when he was only twenty-three or twenty-four. The head is turned so as to face the beholder, and half of it is in shadow. A steel gorget partly covers the stalwart young shoulders, and just above the gleaming metal a soft white collar appears, on which a full light falls. Nothing could be simpler than this conception. It breathes the very spirit of Rembrandt's vigorous youth. The bit of armor hints at the love of the picturesque which was in him, but otherwise he gives us nothing of the "studio arrangement"; he paints himself as he saw himself, with a clear matter-of-fact eye. What does he do, in addition to all that I have already indicated, to give this portrait a place apart, to make us realize that he has something new to tell us? He gives to the sheer *paint* of which the portrait is made a rich, warm, sensuous quality, a character in its very grain that fills us with a sense

of individuality and beauty. The point may be made the clearer if, for a moment, we compare the paint of Rembrandt with the paint of an Italian, say, like Raphael. When the latter has a portrait to make like the famous "Young Cardinal" in the Prado, or the "Baldassare Castiglione" in the Louvre, he makes it one of the world's masterpieces, both as an interpretation and as an example of draughtsmanship, modelling, and style; but he does not get out of its surface quite all that there is to be got of texture and color. He does not make you feel the charm that resides in painted surface, simply for its own sake. In a sense, it scarcely matters whether he paints his portrait in oils or in water-colors.

Now Rembrandt makes you feel that he could not paint his portrait in anything save in oils, and that he is bent upon making every inch of his canvas show the intrinsic charm of oil paint. In his hands it has a fat, unctuous quality, and it is saturated in light, so that the paint might be described as a kind of skin laid upon the canvas, following all the subtle modulations of form in the object represented, and having an organic life of its own. The bony structure in a man's face is expressed in touches having a mysterious life in them. They state the fact, and in stating it they give you a new beauty to admire — the beauty of transparent pigment — which is a beauty as individualized and as haunting as the beauty of a jewel, of a flower, of the sea, or of the sky. Furthermore, and

this is the final element in painter's magic, a master like Rembrandt cannot manipulate pigment in this way without disclosing his own original quality. It is like the touch of the musician; one great violinist or pianist touches his instrument as no one else in the world could touch it. So Rembrandt lends to those rich living surfaces of his an accent which we recognize as though it were the accent of a word falling from his lips.

It was modified, of course, by the passage of time, and it would be very interesting, if the process were not too minute for our present purpose, to follow Rembrandt step by step through his long career, observing the evolution of his art from the productions of his youth to those of his old age. He was always learning, and there is always something to learn in contemplating his passage from one stage to another. But the main point is easily stated. It is true that in his earlier years Rembrandt painted closely and even sometimes laboriously. He is never, at this time, hard and mechanical, like the mediocrities of his school; but he is very patient and careful in the definition of forms. Both in details of anatomical construction and in matters of costume he is a painstaking realist. But even in his formative years his carefulness has more elasticity than you will find in the freedom of most other men, and as time goes on his art steadily broadens, until, in his prime, his works are executed with superb ease and energy. In com-

plete command of his instruments, knowing just what he wants to do and precisely how to do it, he builds up his massive portraits as though without conscious effort, deepening and enriching his color, making his light and air purer and fuller, more like the light and air of life itself, and altogether putting more clearly and more brilliantly the stamp of greatness upon his work.

Rembrandt drank in the inspiration of the Bible at his mother's knee, and he left pictures of religious themes to show that he could illustrate the divine narrative with the highest dignity and the tenderest feeling. But it is man, in all his infinite variety and in all the chances of daily life, that chiefly serves to stir the depths of his imagination. Character was his ceaseless preoccupation. A great part of the business of his life was the portrayal of his contemporaries, and when he painted them he showed forth their hearts and brains, not only in their faces, but in their bodies, in their hands, in all that is implied by carriage and gesture. His parents occupied both his brush and his etching needle; he was forever making portraits of Saskia, of Titus, and afterward of Hendrickje Stoefells, and all his life long he was pondering his own features and telling, as he drew them, far better than words could tell, of what lay beneath their surface.

What manner of ideal is it that we may discern there with his aid? Not an ideal of romantic yearn-

ing after beauty. Not the ideal of a poet in the ordinary sense of the word, seeing visions and dreaming dreams. No, it was the ideal of a profoundly sympathetic human being, fascinated by the poignant meaning of the life around him, impelled to express its touching beauty in terms of simplicity and truth, and moved in the midst of all this to come to close quarters with his technique, to feel the special quality residing in mere paint. Whether, as in his earlier period, he gave a smooth pure tone to his surfaces, or in later years employed a thick impasto, so that sometimes great ridges or smears or "blobs" of paint appear upon his canvas, you feel in him always the man who loves his medium.

III

HALS

Frans Hals, the contemporary of Rembrandt, shares none of the latter's graver, more thoughtful traits, but reveals the same passion for the materials of the painter. In this he is one of the most modern types to be found in the past. His latest biographer, Mr. Gerald S. Davies, notes that he never painted a religious, a classical, an historical, or a nude subject; that he never painted a subject "in which either a moral motive or a pathetic motive was the *raison d'être* of the picture." What he did do was to set upon the canvas, in moments of peaceful enjoyment

or absolute placidity, the personalities of men and women who were capable of heroic deeds on one day and of contented forgetfulness of them on the next. Born only twelve or fourteen years after the opening of the war of independence, he was never swept into the current of public events. Holland may have been in eruption, but he painted Holland in repose. Even the swaggering volunteers immortalized in his corporation pieces are warriors on holiday, and, in short, all of this master's work is dedicated to themes suggestive of anything rather than the throes of a nation in revolt. Nature in its wholly normal aspect was the foundation of his art.

We know next to nothing of the man himself. He loved the material side of life, loved it, perhaps, too well, for among the few details of his private career that remain to us there are some proving pretty conclusively that his habits were none of the best. If his old age was dreary and he died a poor man, his convivial foibles were probably the cause. It is impossible to think of Hals as a prudent man. He enjoyed his food and drink, and took no thought of the morrow. But in so far as we can reconstruct the nature of the man from his work we are undoubtedly safe in affirming that he loved sincerity and truth. These are the qualities that shine out from all his paintings. His early work has disappeared. Information about his period of apprenticeship is as scarce as information about his private life. At Antwerp, where he

was born, and spent his boyhood and youth, he may have acquired some of the artistic traits of Adam Van Noort, as a regular worker in the studio of that mediocrity; he may, in the same city, have been influenced by companionship with the young Rubens, or by study of the paintings of Antonio Moro. Proceeding to Haarlem as a young man, he may have derived something from Karel Van Mander, in whose studio he is said to have labored as a pupil; and the colleague of Van Mander, Cornelius Cornelissen, may have taught him a little. But the first authoritative evidence that we have as to the character of Hals as a painter is his "Banquet of St. Joris' Shooting Guild," which dates from 1616, when he was in his early thirties. Then he provided the "good likeness" upon which the Dutch patron strenuously insisted and then, as thereafter, he added to it the fascination of consummate craft.

This thoroughly practical worker, a man willing to please his sitter by giving him first and last a faithful transcript of fact — and, moreover, impelled by his nature to paint the truth or nothing — was a "painter's painter" in the most modern sense of the term. The man who to-day thinks more of the technical quality of his work than of his subject is, according to his lights, a follower of Frans Hals. Only it never would have occurred to Hals that his subject could be subordinated to his technique, and, in fact, be treated as nothing more than a peg on which

to hang an artistic effect. It has been left to the modern painter to exalt pigment higher than it was exalted by the masters who invented it and exploited it with inimitable success. For Hals the human interest was of profound importance. One cannot imagine him as having looked with indifference upon his sitters. He sees character always, and expresses it, in many instances, with much of Rembrandt's gusto. Where he remained a painter's painter is in taking equal delight in the manipulation of his instruments, and in communicating to his portraits the charm that dwells in technique. He has been criticised as one too ready to display his technique, too eager to amaze the beholder. The point is hardly valid. Hals did not attitudinize. If he played with his brushes in a manner somewhat spectacular it was only as a great musician indulges in a certain bravura, because he likes that sort of thing, and has no thought of tickling the ears of the groundling. Hals must have revelled in the exercise of his gifts. No one could possess such gifts and not exercise them in sheer delight of the occupation. The explanation is simple. Gifts like his are in themselves interesting.

Painters rejoice in him because he paints so well, because his touch is so swift and so sure, because the intrinsic quality of paint is brought out in his work as in the work of only one painter in ten thousand. He was not a great colorist. His range was never wide, and it is doubtful if he would ever have

approved himself a master of harmony, even if he had not been compelled, in his huge corporation pieces, to make the best of discordant costumes and draperies. Some of his portraits would look as well in monotone as in color. But there are passages of color in his painting which, taken by themselves, are superb, and I may remark in passing that there are some blacks of his, in a few of his last works, which are as fine, almost, as the blacks of Velasquez. Though we may miss in him the golden glow of Rembrandt, his color and tone are still extraordinarily fine. After all, there is no reason why we should ask Hals to be some one other than himself, to paint with the palette of Titian when there was nothing in his temperament even remotely akin to that of the sumptuous Venetian. We go to Hals for magnificent brushwork, for powerful modelling, and these things he gives us in abounding measure, along with the vitality, the human truth, which we also expect of him.

IV

VERMEER OF DELFT

The fame of Jan Vermeer of Delft is something less than half a century old. It dates from the study of him published in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1866, by W. Burger, who had discovered him only a few years before, and it rests upon a very small body of work. The most painstaking research made

by European experts has discovered in all the collections of the world only between thirty and forty Vermeers of incontestable authenticity. The literature of the subject has grown to be fairly voluminous since Burger's day but it has consisted very largely of criticism of the paintings, and has thrown hardly any light on the history of the man. The definitive publication is the book by Dr. Hofstede de Groot, printed on a large scale with imposing plates, and there is a good monograph by M. Gustave Van Zype. The known facts about Vermeer may still be written on half a page of note-paper.

He was born at Delft in 1632. In his twenty-first year he was married to Catherine Bolnes, by whom he had ten children before his death in 1675. In the year of his marriage he was admitted to the Guild of Painters and the records show that he served as Dean of that body in 1662, and again in 1670. He appears to have been in modest and even poor circumstances. We hear of a debt to the baker which involved the pledging of two of his pictures. Twenty-one years after his death a number of his paintings formed part of a sale at Amsterdam, and the highest figure paid for one of them was that of 200 florins, paid for the magnificent "View of Delft," now one of the glories of The Hague. One picture in the list, the "Jeune Dentellière," to-day in the Louvre, fetched in 1696 the ridiculous sum of 28 florins. It is useless to ask why these things were thus. We know nothing about

it. The archives yield not a scrap of evidence. All we know is that Vermeer, only moderately successful in his lifetime, was neglected and forgotten soon after his death and thenceforth ignored until Burger brought him to light and urged his claims to enthusiastic admiration. His pictures, which were seldom signed, were handed over to Pieter de Hooghe, Nicolas Maes or Metsu. It is a curious reflection on the connoisseurship of past generations, for Vermeer is nothing if not original, a type having only superficial points of contact with the men to whom his works were so light-heartedly ascribed.

What were the origins of his art, studied in the light of internal evidence? M. Van Zype points out that he must have begun his pupilage at a golden moment. Rembrandt was at his apogee. Hals, though on in years, was still painting. Among Vermeer's contemporaries were men then in the full tide of activity like Dou, Brouwer, Ostade, Metsu, Terburg and Cuyp and others nearer his own age, like Maes, De Hooghe, Hobbema, Steen and Ruysdael. Who, in all that busy company, was his master? It has been surmised that he may have issued from the studio of Rembrandt, or at least been subject to his influence, but only one or two of his works give even a fanciful warrant for this theory, and outside of the works we have no data whatever. A more plausible hypothesis would have it that he was formed by Carel Fabritius, the pupil of Rembrandt, untimely lost.

M. Van Zype plays wistfully with the idea that Vermeer may have profited by association with Leonard Bramer, a minor artist of Delft, who had travelled in France and Italy, had met Adam Elzheimer in Rome, was intimate with Rembrandt, and may, as a family friend, have brought into our painter's life a certain inspiration, accounting for the elevation of his art. But all this is pure guesswork. As M. Van Zype is driven to conclude, Vermeer of Delft stands by himself, as isolated a phenomenon as Velasquez in Spain.

His originality began with his attitude toward his material, the familiar life of Delft. The Little Masters of the Low Countries were all wont to paint that life, but from a different point of view. In the first place, they exploited it with a freer touch, a broader humor. Social life at that time was honest but a little coarse. The pleasures of the table were enjoyed without stint. The prosperity of a jest resided in the bluntness of its point. There was a great love of rich comfort, if not of luxury, abroad, and the painters who reflected the spirit of their day either gave easy rein to a mood of realism rather jarring to our modern taste, or wreaked themselves on the sensuous charm of decorative accessories. It took a genius like Rembrandt's to whelm visible truth in the glamour of the creative imagination, or it took another kind of genius like that of Vermeer to bathe the facts of life in just a pure and serene distinction.

There is a painting by him at Dresden, "The Courtesan," which stands alone among all his works as having a kind of vulgar subject which was popular with many of his fellows. Curiously, too, it is painted on a scale larger than was usual with him and in a bolder key of color; but it is significant that it is one of his earlier pieces, and that it is, moreover, lifted by the painter's essentially refined art far above the level on which his countrymen were accustomed to treat the same motive. I make much of this point for the reason that a consummate fineness of fibre is one of Vermeer's most important characteristics.

The crass technician, narrowly jealous of his painting as painting, and inclined to rage if you suspect him of having an intellectual or a spiritual purpose, would withdraw attention from everything in Vermeer save the power of his hand. The more judicious observer will perceive in the work of this painter a special mental quality, a nobility of outlook, a delicate emotion excited by the artist's very subtle *flair* for the beauty in his material. It is well to note the exquisite equilibrium which Vermeer establishes between his figures and their backgrounds. He paints a servant at work in her kitchen, a girl playing a mandolin, or another making music at the harpsichord. His models are prosperous ladies of Delft amusing themselves, writing or reading a letter, tasting a glass of wine or coquettishly toying with jewels. Whatever they are doing he paints them with an ex-

traordinary simplicity, and while never unduly emphasizing an accessory — a musical instrument, a chair, a platter of fruit, a hanging or a picture — he extorts from every detail just the amount of interest and beauty necessary to the perfecting of his unit of design. He sometimes went a little further afield. There is a picture of "Diana and her Nymphs" by him at The Hague; in a Scottish collection there is a noble religious painting of his, "Jesus in the House of Martha," and Dr. Bredius owns a Vermeer, "The New Testament," which shows, by a process of suggestion, that the artist had a certain feeling for sacred things. But his genius would appear to have been most naturally and conclusively expressed in those domestic interiors to which I have alluded, those placid scenes in which men and women, preferably women, are painted in softly lighted rooms, just for the sake of such beauty as form, color and light may yield.

His drawing is impeccable. His figures stand upon their legs; they are solid bodies modelled with absolute knowledge. He loves beautiful blues, yellows and grays, and he makes them more beautiful by the cool luminosity in which he saturates them. What a painter would call the *facture* of his work is incomparable. He invests his surfaces with a beauty in which you recognize the very essence of perfect technique. A square inch cut from one of his paintings, a square inch of one of those walls against which he poses his figure, would by itself tell you that a master

of his craft had passed that way. Yet, as has already been suggested, the qualities in Vermeer that ravish the eye have their source not in manual dexterity alone but in the artist's temperament, in modes of thought and feeling. He must have had a veritable passion for beauty. If he could not give his Diana an aureole of unmistakably poetic grace he could, at all events, substitute a sensuous charm which is in its way as beguiling as anything a more classically minded painter could have achieved. There is an impressive dignity about his "Jesus in the House of Martha," for all that there is nothing there of that mystery and awe which Rembrandt would have imported into the scene. In other words, though Vermeer was neither a poet nor a dramatist and had no large inventive faculty, the heart and soul of the man were somehow touched to a fine issue and made him a great painter in more than a technical sense. He raised the every-day motives of common life to a higher power, glorified them by sincerity and truth, and set them apart by the singular strength and beauty of his style. One of the salient virtues of Vermeer is the rounded maturity of his work. We have nothing tentative of his, no experimental or roughly finished pictures, unless we except the portrait of a young girl discovered by Dr. Bredius in a private collection at Brussels several years ago, and the looser handling in this may easily have been intentional. In any case, the distinguishing mark in a

painting by Vermeer is one of a man knowing just what he wants to do and doing it with equal ease, force and completeness.

He was truly one of the artists who are born, not made. What would we not give to know him better, to realize the man in his habit as he lived! But so closely were the fates destined to keep his secret that even he himself would seem to have contributed to our discomfiture. In the beautiful painting of an artist at work in his studio, which is one of the gems of the Czernin collection at Vienna, Vermeer — if it indeed be he who sits at the easel — turns his back upon the world.

V

CHARDIN AND ALFRED STEVENS

The collector of oddities in the history of the things of the mind may find something to his hand in this matter of the genius of mere paint. It appears to have been very largely a Northern prerogative. Velasquez provides the only salient exception. There are others, especially in Venice, who might seem to contradict this observation, as I have thought when studying, for example, a picture like Titian's great "Entombment" in the Louvre. But though you find brushwork in him which testifies, in a measure, to a special sensitiveness to the qualities of pigment, it is on the whole for its color that he values his

paint. Neither in Titian nor in any other Italian master do we recognize that recondite *flair* for pigment which I have attempted to describe. By some turn of caprice, that seems to have flourished more in the North than in the South. It must have been pure accident, too, an affair of individual fortune. Rembrandt, Hals, and Vermeer have it, but for some occult reason Rubens and Van Dyck miss it. This is peculiarly puzzling where Rubens is concerned, for he had a headlong brush and was in many ways a miraculous technician. Perhaps it was some inherent strain of coarseness in him that held him back. Hals, who did not possess quite his glorious sweep, still knew better than he did how to raise brushwork to a higher power, marrying it to the indefinable magic of paint.

Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin, another Northern type, is of a characteristically French grain. Born in Paris in 1699, and dying there eighty years later, he spent his long life under a régime consecrated to the laws of taste. His father was a maker of billiard tables. There was nothing in his birth or upbringing to assimilate him to an aristocratic mode of thought, save that the elder Chardin practised his craft in the service of the King and so was in a position to win courtly patronage for his son. Jean Baptiste, trained to the art of the painter from an early age, was destined to profit in due time from exceptional social opportunities, yet even when he was selling his pictures to kings and nobles he remained the same sim-

ple, unspoiled bourgeois. He cared nothing for the frivolity of his time and sturdily resisted all that was meretricious in its elegant artifice. He painted children and domestic servants, he painted still life, and in the art of the period he looms like some high-minded, sterling provincial in a Parisian salon or boudoir. It would not be quite just to call Chardin an eighteenth-century Vermeer. He is too much his own man. Nevertheless he does take us back to the early Dutch school, through his wholesome human tone, his manly sincerity. He painted little subjects and he made them great. The painter of still life often errs through being too descriptive. Like Zola, piling up the details in a mass of natural objects, he lingers too long over each apple or peach in a basket of fruit. Chardin saw his subject as a whole, gave it pictorial unity, and through the distinction of his technique made it beautiful. Diderot, pausing before his painting of some plums, hailed him as the greatest colorist of the Salon and added that he was "perhaps one of the greatest colorists in the whole realm of art." Criticism long since confirmed that judgment and it has come to regard Chardin, too, as one of the skilfullest of the wizards of mere painting.

His surfaces are as delicate as Vermeer's. Suavity is, indeed, Chardin's leading trait. His powerful sense of form never manifested itself in any exhibitions of rude strength. There is something which I can only describe as endearing about his figures,

something in the tender touch with which they are outlined, something akin to the sweet sentiment pervading his subject pictures. He was an academician, like every other eighteenth-century French painter of ability, but he worked from no rules and allowed no hardness of convention to creep into his style. His conscientious method — which, by the way, has contributed to the good preservation of most of his works — was also an easy, supple method. He drew without an atom of self-consciousness, firmly, accurately, and in a free, sensitive manner. He drew with the brush, using the breadth and the generalizing instinct of the true painter, and line, with him, is finely subordinated to the soft, almost atmospheric effect of the whole composition. His paint is, for the connoisseur of such things, as subtly delicious and intoxicating as some noble old vintage. It is very pure, it has substance and weight, its depths have mystery, and all the time it is an exquisite pearly wonder, a thing of bloom, and, I repeat, of magic. There is a fashionable cult for him now. The ambitious collector must have a Chardin in his gallery, regardless of expense, and of late this painter has become portentously expensive. But this new vogue of his, reviving that which he enjoyed in the heyday of his career, leaves him, just the same, the property of the painter and the critic. He is one of the great models of technique, one of those masters who recall us to fundamental principles.

How many of the artists of our modern times have responded to his appeal? How many have taken their point of departure, not, we will say, from Chardin alone, but from that whole movement which includes the Dutchmen I have cited and Velasquez as well as the eighteenth-century Frenchman? The answer may justly enough be made prodigally inclusive. This magic of mere paint has stirred unnumbered painters to ardent emulation. But from another point of view the historian must arrive at a far less complacent conclusion. A few modern painters, but only a few, have come within a really negotiable distance of recapturing not alone the old adroitness but the old perfection. Manet, with his splendid directness, and Whistler, with his exquisiteness, both showed that they were not unworthy of their renowned predecessors. But the one modern man who by instinct came perhaps nearer than any other to reviving the ancient spell was the Belgian, Alfred Stevens, who was born in 1828. He lived in Paris and his environment exerted a pressure upon him of a certain sort. He made himself the interpreter of Parisian society in its most fashionable aspects, painting the *frou-frou* of the Second Empire with an authority unassailed by any of his clever contemporaries. He saw at close range what was done by all of the groups, Academic, Romantic, Impressionistic, and so on, which went to the making of French art in the nineteenth century and extended their influ-

ence sooner or later over the world. But Stevens kept himself to himself, from the beginning to the end of his long career, and even the ideas which he drew from Japanese art failed to swerve him from the style to which he was born. That was a style rooted in the honest simplicity of the old Dutch school and in that same passion for paint which burned in the soul of Vermeer. He is, in fact, our modern Vermeer, achieving in the works of his prime a beauty of surface almost if not quite comparable to that of the old master. I allude specifically to the works of his prime because Stevens in his later years terribly declined, and numbers of his pictures painted then are deplorably brittle and uninteresting. When he was at his best he was a magnificent painter, a man who in his technique, whether it was wreaked upon the figure or upon furniture, flowers, and other accessories, made pigment in and for itself a thing of sensuous rapture.

Stevens thus succeeded because he had, like Velasquez or Vermeer, the divine gift, the zest for paint that comes — and comes so rarely! — from the good fairies, and never can be taught. But incommunicable as the magic of mere paint is, it is not the appanage of the naïve, artless painter. From the biographies of the masters it is plain that they thought, and thought hard, about what they were doing. Alfred Stevens, who quite well understood the difference between painting and literature, and never in

his life was in the smallest danger of sacrificing his technique to an extraneous motive, has a saying in his wise "Impressions sur la Peinture" with which I like to bring these observations to a close. "Une étincelle de lumière," he says, "posée sur un accessoire par un maître hollandais ou flamand, est plus qu'une habileté de pinceau, c'est un trait d'esprit."

IV

Contemporary European Painting

IV

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN PAINTING

I

A GENERATION has passed since Edouard Manet painted his picture of "Le Mendiant," a full-length portrait of a broken-down old *blouse*. He was then at the height of his unpopularity, applauded by a few of his fellow painters and defended by one or two critics, but contemned by officialdom in French art, and laughed at by the public. Some time ago I saw "Le Mendiant," hung in a place of honor in the exhibition of the Secession at Berlin. It was surrounded by the works of men devoted to Manet's memory, looking upon him as one of the great liberators of modern painting — if not the greatest of them all — and feverishly emulous of his ideal of independence. With so much zeal had the young Germans served that ideal that they had out-Heroded Herod, and made Manet look like a classic lost amongst barbarians. It was as though one had found a drawing by Ingres in a sheaf of caricatures by the artists of Montmartre, or a Greek bust amid a group of

Rodin's most audacious sculptures. It was like turning the pages of an anthology and finding a poem of Landor's on the same page with one of Whitman's yawps. It was like a sudden change in a musical programme from a quartette of Beethoven's to a cacophonous symphony by Richard Strauss. In short, Manet looked in this gallery like a Samson among the Philistines. Under any circumstances the spectacle would invite reflection as well as mirth, but it kept recurring to my mind with a special point as I travelled over Europe looking everywhere for "signs of the times" in the art of painting. Even in my peaceful hours with the old masters there would come back the tormenting question, — "What have the schools made of the liberty of which they are so boastful?" Before I offer an answer to that question I must glance briefly at the situation which produced Manet.

In the turmoil of the Revolution, French art lost its hold on the romantic glamour and the exquisite mundane charm of Watteau and his group. Proceeding to put its house in order under the Napoleonic régime, it accepted the guidance of David and dedicated itself to his principle of classical discipline. How much there is to be said for that principle was shown when a man of genius arose in the person of Ingres, a pupil of David's, equalling his master in the exploitation of the grand style, and surpassing him in draughtsmanship and feeling for beauty. But in

that transitional period men of genius were rare, and when, presently, in the first half of the nineteenth century, they began to come to the surface, they found a large body of Academicians, of very unequal merit, in possession of the field. We are apt to underestimate the value of the academic idea, and to scorn its exponents as, all of them, necessarily mediocre. As a matter of fact there is a distinction not to be despised about the work of men like Flandrin, Amaury Duval, Delaroche, Chassériau and the rest, and Ingres, of course, is a master. But we must not pursue this tempting issue. The important point for our present purpose is that a generation of artists arose to whom temperament was everything, the classical hypothesis a delusion and a snare, and nature a mistress worth all the gods and goddesses in the academic Pantheon. Géricault turned his back upon antiquity and painted "The Wreck of the Medusa." Decamps saw no reason why he should sit in a Paris studio, painting in a gray light, while he could go and bathe in the sun-saturated colors of the Orient. Corot, Rousseau, Daubigny, and Diaz, all looked for a new vein in landscape, and found it. Delacroix, being born a romanticist, left Greek form and repose to take care of themselves and gave passion its chance. Millet preferred a peasant misshapen by toil to the fairest vision on Olympus. The mere enumeration of these names is enough to recall historic battles fought and won. They did not, however, make fur-

ther conflicts unnecessary. On the contrary, there was much work left for even more drastic innovators to do.

Manet was to weary of the routine of Couture's studio, and instead of adding to the statuesque figures painted there, was to scandalize the Academicians by his "Olympia." Degas, who worshipped Ingres and, it is said, still goes on worshipping him, was to turn from admiring "La Source" and to use what it taught him in the realistic delineation of laundresses, ballet-girls, and jockeys. Whistler was to enter a world of which Gleyre, his master, knew nothing, and to develop, along lines of his own, the tonality invented by Velasquez. Monet was to show that the Barbizon school had hardly grazed the problems of light. And all these men were bent upon demonstrating what, by this time, needed repeated demonstration, that the great thing to do was to paint well, to practise a technique expressing the very soul of pigment. They succeeded in their aim. They extended the boundaries of modern art, indicating new ways of using its instruments, and they are to-day the recognized chiefs of the more progressive painters everywhere. What Manet meant to the Berlin Secessionists when they honored him after the fashion I have described, he means to the younger generation — and to many of its elders — throughout Europe, in England and in America. Through him and through his companions the painter of liberal tendencies feels that he

comes into touch with the right tradition, the tradition of Rembrandt, of Velasquez, and of Hals. There is the crucial point, — that the hater of academic convention, the lover of individuality and freedom, has had his battle fought for him, that he is able to do as he pleases in full enjoyment of the inspiration once disdained, as that of 1830 had been disdained, but now respected even where it is not adopted. What is the result? We have been told *ad nauseam* how the public and the critics have failed to do justice to Whistler, for example. It is interesting to ask what the artists have done to prove themselves worthy of him and his old comrades.

In France the Salon remains, on the whole, the inviolable stronghold of canonical authority. I well remember the organized rebellion which led to the opening of the Salon of the Champs de Mars. With what jubilation it was hailed! At the time, the contrast between the "new" and the "old" Salons was really striking, and there was a thrill of excitement to be got out of the quarrel. I have never been able to recapture that thrill. In fact I have gone through Salon after Salon only to see the "new" and the "old" little by little settling down into comfortable harmony. French art rubs along in the good old way, and you may look at thousands of the pictures now being painted, without being reminded by any of them that Manet "fought, bled, and died" for the cause. If one looked foolishly for little Manets he would de-

serve to be disappointed; but what one looks for, of course, is quite another thing, — it is the broad lesson that Manet might have been supposed to enforce, without robbing any man of his individuality, upon those who praise him so glibly. It is never through their crass imitators that the masters fertilize the art coming after them; it is rather through the establishment of general principles that they make their influence felt. Thus it is reasonable to expect, when Manet is a name to conjure with, a deep general interest in simplicity, in the direct handling of pure color, in the bold and truthful manipulation of values. But to expect these things is to expect a little too much, in Paris. I speak, of course, of French art in the mass, and there is the more reason for so doing as the individualities of the moment are neither numerous enough nor, apparently, potent enough, to leaven the lump.

Smart dexterity is at a premium, and the instinct for beauty seems to have lost a good deal of its vitality, when it has not suffered absolute atrophy. The average French picture suggests that modern taste has been transformed into a part of the nervous system and is concerned altogether with sensation, not with principle. The outcome is work of a rather vulgar cast, vulgar both in substance and in style. What survives that is ingratiating in the bulk of French painting is the purely professional quality, that can be acquired by reasonable application in the schools; on

all sides we see the fruit of methodical teaching attentively followed. The *salonnier* knows how to put his great "machine" together, — his mere craftsmanship is a credit to him. But it is too often void of any serious significance. I cannot see that there has been any wide-spread improvement in the handling of form as form, any happy loosening of the bonds created as though by an impersonal government and bearing a government stamp. The majority are faithful to the immemorial, competent, but humdrum method of the big overcrowded ateliers to which the young idea comes, in hundreds, to be taught how to shoot. Looking at one canvas after another the inquirer murmurs, "Was it for this that the heroes of the Salon des Refusés did their best to augment the language of art?" Similarly he asks, in the presence of most of those huge decorations which the French so generously order for their public buildings, "Was it for this that Puvis de Chavannes wrought out his noble conception of mural painting?"

In form and in design, then, French art is stationary. Such gains as have been made have been largely in respect to the treatment of light, a fact pointing to the greater influence of Monet than of any of his colleagues. Impressionism has filtered its way down into modern painting, and the younger men have learned the value of sunlight, if they have learned nothing else, from the revolutionists of the sixties and seventies. Not so many of them, on the other hand,

have known just what to do with their new resource; they do not create, they mark time. Only here and there among the French has the precious lesson resulted in a rich addition to contemporary art. It is not the rule, but the exception, to find work as delightful as that of Henri Martin, one of the most engaging talents which have appeared in a long time. He has a charming decorative vein, and in the luminous quality of his canvases, which is a chief element in their appeal, you can see that he has profited in the right way by the example of his seniors. He has a note of his own, thus emphasizing my contention that one does not need to imitate in order to make use of what Monet and his colleagues brought into modern painting.

Even more exhilarating testimony on this head is offered by the salient figure now at work in the school, Albert Besnard. He is the one man the French have who not only has something to say but says it in a fresh and powerful manner. He has been the better for having shared in the later impressionistic movement, but, with the authority of the true artist, he has subdued to his own purposes whatever has been suggested to him by others. Many years ago a comrade hurried me in a frenzy of enthusiasm half across Paris to see Besnard's decorations in the Ecole de Pharmacie, then recently completed. It was a dark, rainy day, but one forgot the gloom in contemplation of Besnard's ebullient nervous force and robust color.

He was always a colorist, and as the years have passed he has used the language of color with more and more sinewy strength, with more and more fire. Incidentally he has given freer play to his imagination. He was a realist pure and simple when he did the panels in the Ecole de Pharmacie; now he is a poet as well, a standing rebuke to those narrow-minded artists who fancy that their technique will go to pieces if they permit themselves the expression of an idea. What I like best about him, though, better than his color by itself, or his decorative gift by itself, or his workmanship by itself, is the virility with which everything in his art is fused into a rich, brilliant chord.

Besnard is a "first-class man," a master of form, of light and air, of style. But you will look far in France before you will find another Besnard. Beside him a man, say, like the late Gaston Latouche, with his golden glow, his vaporous stained-glass effects, seems just a clever dealer in artifice. That is the prevailing note in Paris. For one man whose work is, like Besnard's, "of the centre," you have scores, hundreds, who are facile and sometimes even accomplished, but, in the grain of their work, incurably factitious. They have made no better use of the freedom from formula, won by Manet and the others, than to put more formulæ — usually very hollow ones — in the foreground. Little groups are formed, each one devoted to the unfolding of a trick which some new man has made temporarily popular. They wax and wane, and you

wonder why they ever flourished at all. A sensation is made at the Salon, not by an honest piece of painting with an original accent, but by some prismatic audacity having no relation to nature, by some purely arbitrary scheme of chiaroscuro, or, as in one case that I have in mind, by a return to the "brown sauce" of certain old masters for which Manet had such a loathing. There has been some provocation for these pseudo-original experiments in the public success of certain artists. Rodin, taking his cue from Michael Angelo, seeks to make a figure emerge like an exhalation from the marble block. His disciples immediately proceed to make their figures "emerge," forgetting that the main thing is to show, as Rodin has shown, that as your figure comes out you must justify it by strong modelling. He is apt at writhing bodies, carrying the note, in his later work, to absurd lengths. The writhings and contortions are accepted as having something talismanic about them, and as being certain to sell, and they are served up by any number of dabsters with an effrontery that would be disgusting if it were not funny.

Constantin Meunier, the Belgian sculptor, having done interesting work in the realistic portrayal of working men, it seems to have occurred to many artists that all they need to do in order to "make the bourgeois sit up" is to model ugly types of labor, — it does not matter if there is not an ounce of Meunier's power in the modelling. In painting, one of the most

pernicious exemplars was the late Eugène Carrière, who long ago attracted favorable attention, and in some quarters incited silly panegyrics, by his studies of figures enveloped in a dark, smoky mist. His portraits and types of maternal sentiment were pleasing, for a time. Then they wore out their welcome. He overdid his formula until he left it a formula and nothing more. But the mischief had been done; he had helped to confirm the unthinking in the notion that a picturesque surface effect may legitimately be used over and over again for its own sake, that nature may be forced into a pattern. France is now engaged in the making of such patterns to an enormous extent. Clever mediocrity, the characteristic product of our age, momentarily catches the eye, but leaves no lasting impression. At a time when the artist is nothing if not individual, there is an extraordinary lack of really significant individuality.

Signor Alfredo Melani, in an article on the works of art at a Milan exhibition included in my travels, described them as "the triumph of the young men," and spoke in fervid terms of "this artistic youthfulness which is no longer wasted in academic formulæ, but pursues its ways with courage, sure of *the strength which dwells in its independence*." The italics are mine. It was for that that I searched, the strength which dwells in independence. I saw the Milan exhibition, and, to tell the truth, I did not discover any great stores of strength among Signor Melani's young men.

No doubt they have, as he says, "buried the academic once for all," but the question is, What have they put in its place? They have put the craze of the moment, cleverness, cleverness, always cleverness, the same sort of thing that reigns in other countries, the same straining after effect that we have seen in Paris, the same contortions of the sibyl without the oracle. There is technique in the South, but it is technique without style.

I was especially struck by two rooms, one occupied by Ettore Tito and the other by a group calling themselves "Young Etruria." Tito has "arrived," he is one of the popular leaders. I recollect seeing at one of the international exhibitions in Venice some of his earlier things, and looking for his work thereafter with curiosity, — it seemed likely to bring pleasant surprises. But at Milan, where I encountered both old and new paintings by him, he seemed to have risen, after all, little above the ordinary level of the Salon. "Young Etruria," highly resolved to spurn that level, had nothing more to brag of than the piquancy of youth, and made the observer wonder very hard if anything of substantial worth would come of its febrile strivings. The room was prettily decorated and furnished, — raising a point to which we shall have to return, — but I could find in it no promise of genius. That was the trouble with the whole show. It had one merit. It promised the ultimate, and perhaps speedy, disappearance of the old petty,

brittle style of the days when Fortuny was adored, and feebly imitated, without any comprehension of what really made him adorable, in Rome and Naples. A broader convention is coming into vogue. Unfortunately it does not appear to have brought out an artist of the first rank.

There was in the grounds at Milan, by the way, a special little exhibition of works by Segantini, that painter of the Brianza who found, as Millet had found before him, a poetic inspiration in the humblest motives of rustic life. Like every man of talent in this epoch of frantic publicity, he has had some prodigious eulogiums pronounced upon his art. Well, he is not one of the giants. I have seen his pictures again and again, and it occurred to me as I saw them in Milan, as it had occurred to me when I saw them in the Paris Exposition of 1900, that they do not wear any too well. The hard, grainy surface of his big Alpine landscapes — too big, I think, since mere bulk of canvas will not suffice to express the atmosphere of the mountains — throws off nothing of that impalpable charm of beauty which is the great secret of eternal freshness in art. But Segantini, if only by the force of contrast, seemed a grievous loss to Italian painting. At least he had a large way of looking at his subject, a fine sincerity, and a complete incapacity for being simply clever. There was something that made for sardonic amusement in the fact that Bistolfi's monument to his memory, visible in the

same pavilion, showed a nude female "emerging," à la Rodin, out of a huge block of marble. It is wonderfully well done. Bistolfi knows his craft. But one thought neither of him nor of Segantini, but of the French sculptor, not of an idea or a style, but of a fashion.

It is a time of small things in the North, as in the South. Menzel has left no successor in Germany, nor has he exercised an appreciable influence upon his countrymen. The latter pay him all possible tribute. You come across his works in all the museums, and there has been published in Munich a superbly illustrated volume of his productions, a monumental kind of catalogue. But I wondered as I turned its pages why so few of the young Germans seemed to have sat at his feet. An artist like Menzel proclaims at once an inimitable individual style, and broad fructifying principles, but for all the good he has done to modern German art Menzel might just as well not have existed. A group of paintings and studies by him in the retrospective wing of the Berlin Salon formed as curiously suggestive an episode there as was formed by Manet's picture in the show of the Secession. Of course there is, in the last resort, no accounting for the richness or the poverty of a country in great artists. A man is born a genius or a journeyman, and there's an end to it. Nevertheless, an influence is an influence, and it is hard to see why, with Menzel in their midst, the Germans have gone

on painting in a state of utter blindness to the rudimentary lessons he was all the time teaching them. There hung in the Berlin Salon a painting by him of a falcon and another bird, fighting furiously in the sky. It was painted in 1843, and I dare say it has been seen in the long years that have elapsed since then by thousands of native artists. It is a masterpiece of movement, of texture, of draughtsmanship, and, I had almost said, of color. It is so painted that he who runs may read. The simple demonstration that this picture gives of the way in which to go to work with your brushes might at least tell a youth what, roughly, to try for. But the sense of the German is sealed. He continues to fill his canvas with crude garish color and turgid drawing. As for beauty, for sensuous charm, for grace and subtlety, they have suffered unmitigated shipwreck. This is a hard saying, yet it is borne out to the bitter end by the documents of the case. Go to any of the permanent galleries. Their treasures of earlier European painting have been gathered with remarkable judgment, and they are splendidly arranged. The Berlin Gallery is a triumph of installation and administration; nowhere, not in Vienna, in Paris, in London, will you find the old masters more effectively assembled and displayed. But enter the rooms devoted to the moderns, the natives, and your heart sinks into your boots, dismayed by the tastelessness and dulness of what you see. Now and then some one has appeared

to shame the men in the ruck, — a genius like Menzel, a portrait-painter almost a genius, like Lenbach, or men of talent such as Liebermann and Leibl. For the rest, the mission of the German painters seems to have been to set the teeth of the connoisseur on edge.

It has been the proud boast of the Secessionists that they have changed all this, and at Munich especially their large claim is upheld by sympathetic foreigners to the extent of exhibiting with them. The final justification of the claim is, however, another matter. It is true that the Secessionists have, like the young Italians, "buried the academic once for all." It is true that they are broad in method where the majority are niggling. It is true that they have ideas, of a sort; an ambition to be imaginative and poetic, if not the actual power to be the one or the other; a desire to rise above the stupid painting of sentimental subjects. It is true, finally, that they are often very clever. But they are afflicted with a deplorable earthiness, a downright coarseness, which, apart from all question of subject, reacts upon the whole fabric of their art. Consider again, for a moment, that apparition of Manet among the Berlin Secessionists. His "Mendiant" is certainly not a beautiful figure, but just for that reason it the more aptly illuminates our situation. *It is a beautiful piece of painting.* The color is fine, the *facture* is masterly, the style is distinguished. Truth is here, if ever

truth was set upon canvas, but it is truth made beautiful by art. All around it the Secessionists riot in nerveless brutal drawing, in gaudy or morbid color, in thick opaque tone, and in the most dubious taste. Like the Young Etrurians they are sublime in furnishings. Whistler's notion of hanging a gallery with some light stuff has taken them captive. Like him, they are fastidious in frames and battens. In the disposition of "æsthetic" chairs and settees, with bay-trees for the middle of the room or in the corners, they are beyond reproach. In some German exhibition I found a fountain containing water colored a blue to disconcert the Mediterranean, — it was the last word of decorative ingenuity. Unhappily these things are as naught if the pictures on the walls are poor. Not all the pearly backgrounds in the world will pull an exhibition through if the painters bring raucous reds and greens, unspeakable yellows and blues, to the making of their pictures.

Franz Stuck, the hero of the Secessionist movement, is a strange type. He has a warm imagination and a remarkable pictorial faculty. You could not look at his "Dead Christ" or at his "Bacchanale" without feeling that the painter had a temperament, an outlook peculiar to himself. The "Bacchanale," a night scene with the rout alone illuminated, the pillared porch in the foreground and the murk of trees in the distance being in romantic shadow, was in intention, at least, a thing of poetic emotion. But in these pic-

tures, as in many others I have seen, Stuck loses all the lyric charm at which he aims, or all the tragic force which is more often his ambition, through harsh drawing and modelling and through color that I can only describe as livid when it is not blatant. He is representative. After overhauling the works of the Secessionists from end to end, you come to the sorrowful conclusion that they do not understand color at all. Neither, for that matter, have they any true sense of form. In both respects it is a coarseness of fibre that seems to tell against them, a coarseness that belongs alike to the weakest and the strongest of the technicians among them. Their nudes are the nudest things in modern art. It does not matter with what dainty idea they start. Like Arnold Böcklin, the Swiss painter, whose overrated work is much liked in Germany, they will invent a good design, with a delicate idea at its core, and then keep it from making its full effect by using colors brilliant but without quality, and making their contours as inelastic as lead. Secession and Salon alike are thus heavy-handed. It is the national trait in art. There was reason enough for the outcry in Berlin over the statuary of Kaiser Wilhelm's Sieges-Allée. It is fearsome stuff. But there is nothing exceptional about it. You find statuary like it all over Germany.

English art, official English art, stands just where it has stood these many years, and the Royal Academy is lucky inasmuch as it can count upon the work

of one foreign master for its annual exhibitions. I once met an artist friend on the steps of Burlington House. Each wondered what in the world the other was doing there, — if he was in search of pleasurable artistic sensations. I had just been in to see Sargent's contribution. He was going in for the same purpose. I thought of him on the pilgrimage I am describing when I saw once more that without Sargent the Academy would be an overwhelming bore. What is it made of? Furlongs of canvas without any elements of interest whatever. Laboriously built-up compositions, historical, sentimental, "conscientious" beyond words, and ineffably flat. Gaudy, pompous portraits. Commonplace landscapes. At long intervals a creditable piece of painting, strayed in as if by accident, but in general a disheartening mass of mediocre routine work. Criticism beats in vain against that fortress of reaction. There is something pathetic and droll about the efforts made to disturb its inertia. One thinks of Sidney Smith and the boy who scratched the turtle's back to give it pleasure. "You might as well stroke the dome of St. Paul's to please the dean and chapter." What does the Academy make of Mr. Sargent? What did it make of the late Charles W. Furse, who was an Associate when he died? Such artists must be very embarrassing. Furse, like two or three others, seems an anomaly in the Tate Gallery, where two of his pictures hang, one of them having been purchased

under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest since his death. This large picture, "The Return from the Ride," gives an excellent idea of what the new school in England has been doing. It represents a young man on horseback, with a woman in flowing light modern dress walking by his side. The group is set against a landscape background, loosely painted and full of light and air. The canvas breathes energy and a passion for fresh, outdoor beauty. It is painted with knowledge and ease, and it discloses an original, sincere temperament. There are not many painters in England to-day who give, as Furse gives, the impression of having taken advantage of the best developments in nineteenth-century art, and of having "found themselves" into the bargain. But there are enough of them to raise lively hopes of English art, unofficial English art.

If it is a question of hopes rather than of present realization, it is because the school seems to be going through a period of transition, and in so eclectic a mood as to be a little uncertain as to its best course. It has been learning from Manet and from Monet; one of its most interesting figures, Charles Shannon, appears to have started under the influence of Legros, and to have since ranged pretty freely among the old masters; and then there are, of course, the adherents of Whistler. These last, to be sure, like so many of their fellows in America, and, for that matter, throughout Europe, have often an odd way of missing the

point. Mr. A. Ludovici, describing that quaint episode in Whistler's career, his presidency of the Society of British Artists, tells how seriously the veterans of Suffolk Street took their new leader's reforms in the matter of hanging. Instead of being happy because pictures were confined to the line, they murmured at the financial loss they saw in mere empty space. They calculated that the square feet wasted around one of Whistler's own pictures were potentially worth £400 to the Society. The anecdote is not out of date. Many of Whistler's followers, who fondly believe they are treading in his path, are as busy over trifles and as blind to essentials as were the malcontents of the British artists. They "go in" for Whistlerian "arrangements," for the careful spacing of the composition, for an esoteric disposition of light and of accessories. Meanwhile, they overlook the one thing of transcendent importance that Whistler had to teach them, the beauty to be got out of consummately manipulated tone. That is a thing absolutely independent of the design, the motive, of a given picture. With it Whistler would still have been Whistler though he had made the famous portrait of his mother as anecdotic a painting as any that ever drew crowds in the Royal Academy. It is the quality of his surface that counts first, the quality of his color and tone. He chose to adopt the kind of composition that we see in his portraits and nocturnes, because it was suited to his character as an artist. His disciples,

to whom it is often not natural at all, go on using it with a childlike confidence in its efficacy, and very rarely reveal any *flair* for his tonal virtues. It is the old story of borrowing a formula for the sake of a formula, to which I have had to allude more than once. The surface idea is caught; the central inspiration is missed. Sargent's example is misunderstood in the same way. A trick of brushwork is all that is developed by the innumerable portrait-painters who try to follow his lead. Yet it is precisely his freedom from mere trickery that accounts for his eminence.

Sargent's big group portrait of Dr. Osler and three of his colleagues, for Johns Hopkins University, loomed in the Royal Academy as a giant looms among pygmies. It is a masterpiece worthy of the historical periods. Painted largely in blacks and on an imposing scale, it involved the solution of a problem beset with heartrending difficulties, yet there was not an inch of it that hinted at hesitancy or effort. The simple broad surfaces have a splendid quality, which time will only improve. The interesting heads are modelled with a combination of learning and spontaneity almost unique in contemporary painting. Sargent is, indeed, the master of them all, towering above the painters of his time everywhere. But how many of his juniors listen to what he has to tell them? How many, looking at this wonderful piece of portraiture in the Academy, paused to think of the hard work concealed beneath the stately unity?

How many, in the effort to profit by the inspiration to be found in the work of a great leader, go really to the heart of the matter?

I suppose the foregoing pages have something of the air of a jeremiad, and that they could be "answered" by an interminable list of Europeans who paint, as painting goes, very well. I could compose such an answer myself. But it would be beside the point. When all is said, it is not sufficient that a man should paint very well, as painting goes, if we are to take him seriously. It is not sufficient that a clever student, having won golden opinions from his instructor, should go on indefinitely producing clever student's work. The brilliantly executed *morceau*, no matter how brilliant, is, after all, only a *morceau;* it may be the beginning, it is certainly not the end of art. What we want is work with brains and individuality in it, new minted work, alive and beautiful, and quivering with emotion. It is comforting to know that hundreds of painters can win their way into the exhibitions. The great thing is that, having got there, each of them should be able to present a really interesting reason for his presence.

II

In modern painting new "movements" are invented overnight. How few of them have any staying power, or do anything really to change for the better those

systems and groups that have long held the field! I have recently been checking up in Europe the impressions of contemporary painting noted in the first chapter of this essay. I could not discover that anything constructive, anything truly progressive had been done. On the contrary, in Paris, the vaunted clearing-house of new artistic ideas, destruction and stagnation seemed the prevailing influences. There was, for example, an exhibition of the Italian "Futurists." It packed the Bernheim-Jeune gallery from day to day, and though the talk there was loudly satirical, there was in the whole affair an element to set one thinking on the ambiguous condition of art matters in France. The astonishing thing to me was that these Futurists had got themselves exhibited at all, and that people were willing to write and talk about them with more or less seriousness, to attempt explanations of them. They deserve no explanation. Surfaces covered with chaotic smears of paint, in which with an effort you may make out fractions of a face or of an arm, are not, strictly speaking, explainable at all. A rag carpet covered with paint of many colors does not make a picture. The show suggested nothing more than a colossal bluff by which a group of impossible theorists actually persuaded people to come and look at so many square yards of colored canvas set within frames. I wondered why it had "come off," wondered what the Parisian state of mind was that could permit the audacity, and this, of course, led to specula-

tion as to what the French painters themselves were doing.

Studio talk revealed the promise of some reaction against the Futurists, the Cubists, and all the other freakish innovators. I learned that the Ingres exhibition at the Georges Petit galleries in the spring of 1911 had made a profound impression, and that there was promise of a return to his sobriety if not to emulation of his methods. Meanwhile, it is plain that something needs to be done. It is late in the day to point out the unprofitable nature of the conventions which have ruled the official exhibitions for years. But I saw a quantity of pictures in Paris which made it worth while to look closely once more into an old subject. There were two exhibitions in the Grand Palais which brought out in sharp relief the bankruptcy of the contemporary French school apart from a few individual types. One of these shows was held by the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs, an organization founded in 1881 and officially recognized as of "public utility." Painstaking examination of that show, the contributors to which devoutly follow the good old rules of the Salon, failed to discover a single really fine work of art, and there were hundreds of pieces from which to choose.

It gave one a comforting and very pleasant emotion of pride to think of what would have happened if these ladies had invited a few of their American sisters in art to bear a hand, giving them a small

room to themselves. I could imagine in that room some portraits by Miss Beaux and Miss Emmet, some flower studies by Mrs. Dewing, some landscapes by Mrs. Coman and Mrs. Nicholls, some miniatures by Miss Hills, and some sculptures by Miss Scudder and Miss Longman. They, it may be said in all moderation, would have *made* the exhibition. For genuine artistic force as distinguished from soulless routine, for depth of feeling as contrasted with triviality and convention, for good taste as against next to no taste at all, they would have put the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs to shame. The irreverent might assert, and not unjustly, either, that the sex has not produced anywhere large numbers of great painters, but it seemed incredible that even on this hypothesis the collection in question should be so uniformly mediocre, that it should nowhere offer even a modest spurt of efficient and distinguished energy. No, it is not a matter of sex. I, too, momentarily developed some cynical reflections on the feminine genius in France, but I quickly realized how irrelevant they were when I penetrated to another part of the building and saw what a certain number of men had been doing.

They ought to have been doing great things, for theirs was the third quinquennial exhibition of the "Prix du Salon et Boursiers de Voyage," and the very legend, on a clever poster displayed outside, whetted anticipation. Back in the 70's M. de Chen-

nevières, then Minister of Fine Arts, was looking about him for a means of encouraging young artists. The establishment of the Prix du Salon and of the Bourses de Voyage assured to the winners the advantages of a couple of years of foreign travel, part of the time to be spent in Italy. Naturally, this beneficent scheme would encourage men of talent to their best efforts. Naturally, one would expect an exhibition of works by the winners to be full of good material. Should not painters and sculptors who had once deserved well of their fellows go on justifying the honor bestowed upon them? I went to the exhibition already mentioned, assuming that it would be, as a matter of course, a good one, and I found the deadening trail of the Salon over everything in it. There was M. Rochegrosse, who won the Prix de Salon in 1882. He made, for some time, a prodigious splash. I recall the Salon in which he exhibited his "Fall of Babylon," the immense canvas which at last found its place in a New York restaurant. On its first appearance, placed at the top of a broad staircase, it set Paris agog. Rochegrosse was a man to reckon with. As he appeared in the show to which I am now referring he seemed inconsequential — merely one more maker of totally uninspired compositions. There were other noted names in the catalogue — Brouillet, Cormon, Cottet, Friant, Gorguet, Muenier, and so on. Of course, these painters displayed due competence — a proper ability to put a picture together in workmanlike fashion.

But to think of their reputations and then to realize the appalling dulness of the collection, its poverty in anything like genius, was to suffer a rueful quarter of an hour. It does not do to say "Why should one expect anything different from the Salonnier?" Surely one is justified in expecting a large group of Parisian prize-winners, seasoned by years of experience, to show some qualities above the average. That was the depressing thing, that everybody represented on the walls had settled down to a dead level. They differed among themselves. The light, shimmering tones of M. Paul Chabas were no doubt nothing like the "brown sauce" of M. Charles Cottet. But at bottom these artists and their colleagues all seemed to me to be working on the common ground of the Salon, making pictures keyed to the exigency of a great annual exhibition and possessing no personal charm whatever — no faintest trace of originality.

The Salonnier not only lacks genius but is in blissful ignorance of the fact that, wanting it, he is wasting his time. I got absorbed in the problem and followed it up with an exploration of collections outside of Paris. Such an exploration enables one to put the matter to the test in a peculiarly illuminating way. As you study the popular figures in nineteenth-century French art in the provincial museums you are struck by two important points. In the first place, you observe that they are at a serious disadvantage. In Paris the Luxembourg is their salvation, for there

they are to be compared only with themselves. I speak, of course, of the men outside the group which has been admitted to the Louvre — Ingres, Delacroix, or Millet, for example, are, in our present inquiry, *hors concours*. The rank and file of the Salon are spared that test in Paris. But in the provinces they are hung with the old masters, for every little town has its Louvre, and there they are tried as if by fire. This brings us to our second point, which is the utter powerlessness of method, as method, to carry anybody into port. It is only individual force that can meet the test to which I have referred. This immemorial truth was only too sadly confirmed as I turned one provincial museum after another inside out. It was pathetic to meet, years after I had well-nigh forgotten them, pictures that I had seen triumphantly flaunting themselves in old Salons. How trebly mechanical they looked! How flat, or how gaudy, was the color in them, and how cold the light! But the cruellest exposure was that of the Salonnier's way of painting form. It is a way so thoroughly instructed and so adequate from a conventional point of view that at times it commands a very nearly fervid respect. You find yourself wishing that certain American artists of undeniable gifts could possess a share of the Frenchman's mere every-day efficiency. But in the next instant you find yourself praying that American art may never crystallize as an immense amount of modern French art has crystallized. The virtue of a

sound mechanism in painting is beyond argument, and it would be foolish to disdain the Salonnier because he is so neat a journeyman. But in the provinces it is hard, much harder than at Paris, to take him without impatience.

The only case in which he seemed to me happily to hold his own was that of Bonnat, at Bayonne. That celebrated painter has produced portraits and pictures which look as though they had been cut out of steel, and his color often sets one's teeth on edge. But Bonnat is a master, he knows form, and he knows how to draw. Finally, he has the personal quality which is worth an age of training, and it was fine to see how in the little museum which he himself created at Bayonne his own works sustain companionship with the old masters, the drawings and paintings by Ingres, and the many other treasures of art that he has given to his native town. This gift of his, by the way, extraordinarily rewards a pilgrimage. The paintings include some exquisite early Italian pieces, Spanish, Flemish and Dutch paintings of great value, and a rare collection of drawings. Some of the most renowned drawings of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Mantegna, Pisanello, Raphael and Titian are at Bayonne. There are some superb Dürers and Rembrandts, and among the moderns Delacroix and Ingres, especially Ingres, are richly represented. Then there are beautiful ancient and renaisssance sculptures, and the collection includes important bronzes and

ivories. Presumably Bonnat will still further enrich the museum. As it stands it is a little gem. The things in it are the things that a painter has loved. Other museums of far greater pretensions cannot claim an equal charm. All that one can regret about it is that it should be tucked away in a far corner of France, where travellers on the way to Spain too seldom pause.

Apropos of Bonnat's generosity, allusion may well be made here to the service rendered by the state to all the provincial museums. Everybody knows how the government encourages painters and sculptors by purchasing their works and distributing these over the country. Incessantly in the museums I would read the legend on a frame, "Given by the State." It is a splendid policy, which one observes with heightened appreciation on tracing the result of it in many towns. The stimulus it gives to public interest in art is realized then more keenly than ever. And yet we come back to the other side of the medal, to the conviction that no government policy but only heaven-sent genius will fill museums with the works that really leaven taste and give people the right ideas. At Bayonne it was Bonnat alone who had anything interesting to say, and there, too, in his museum, room has been found for the popular Salonnier. At Toulouse, where there is a most portentous array of huge Salon canvases, it was only Benjamin Constant who could stand association with the older masters,

and he is saved by virtue of a gorgeousness of color not, after all, very serious in its appeal. At Dijon the museum contains many beautiful old pictures and a generous number of modern works. The latter struck me as, on the whole, negligible, until I encountered the gravely beautiful "Ex Voto" of the late Alphonse Legros. The museum at Lyons is well provided with Salon "masterpieces." But they shrivel into nothingness beside the decorations that Puvis de Chavannes painted for the upper walls of the staircase leading to the picture gallery. And so the tale continues. The government has flooded the provinces with paintings, and thereby given to the French school an immeasurable amount of, no doubt, very desirable and even precious "encouragement." But the searcher who follows the trail of the government's good deeds preserves memories of but a handful of men who painted greatly because they could not help themselves. It is genius, and again genius, the personality, the man *born* to paint, and only that man, who can pit against the record of the past the record of the present.

It is the dearth of personality that is lowering the vitality of contemporary French art. The last time I had "swung round the circle" of all the great Continental exhibitions, endeavoring to run to earth the European painters who seemed to be active in the van, the net result of the inquest was that it appeared to be a case of Besnard first, and the rest nowhere.

In France at least, he still holds precisely the same position. In Paris every one was waiting to see the results of his tour in India. No recent work done in Paris can quite compare with his decorations in the dome of the Petit Palais, or with his sumptuous panel, "L'Isle Heureuse," in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Of the former work he is prouder than of anything else he has done. "*C'est moi*," he says to his friends. But anything of Besnard's, whether it is a vast mural decoration or a trifling sketch, is immediately arresting, because in every inch of it you feel the vibration of his original character. He knows how to paint, and he has something to say. There is organic life in what he does. But I could not discover that Besnard has developed or is promising to develop a fertilizing current of ideas.

V

A Note on French Military Painting

V

A NOTE ON FRENCH MILITARY PAINTING

It is a curious paradox in the history of French art that amongst the thousands of men who have built up the school there have been no great painters wholly dedicated to the commemoration of battle-scenes. In a country peculiarly jealous of its military fame the brush of genius has been wreaked only incidentally on warlike themes. Under the old régime these were treated with the formalism in vogue at court. Baron Gros derived from the shock of the Revolution an impetus which gave to his Napoleonic pictures a certain invigorating significance, but with all his merits and all his constructive influence he nevertheless remains a minor type. Géricault, who breathed a new fire into the tradition of Gros, died too soon to realize all his ambitions, and, besides, was a military painter only at intervals. So it was with Delacroix. In his long career he sought his material in a hundred directions and always with the instinct of a romantic and even poetic genius. From the clash of arms he got more than once a memorable inspiration, and there are paintings of his that are

indeed terrible as an army with banners; but they are of subjects which he took, so to say, casually, between an illustration to Shakespeare and one to Scripture. Charlet and Raffet alone interpreted with fulness and abiding authority the legend of the Empire — and they were lithographers. It was not until the nineteenth century was well advanced that a group of French painters specialized in military subjects, and it so happened that they remained detached from the progressive movements in modern art.

Meissonier was the leader in this group. Born in 1814, he came to manhood and to his artistic maturity early enough to catch in all their poignancy some echoes of Napoleon's campaigns, and down to the day of his death he loved to draw his motives from the great man's career. It was through his Napoleonic pictures that he largely won his world-wide repute and his considerable fortune. There was a time, not so very long ago, when Meissonier could be counted upon to make a prodigious stir in the auction room. But when Degas said of one of his noted battle-pieces that everything in it, except the swords, was made of steel, he foreshadowed the fate that has since overtaken the painter of "Les Cuirassiers," "1814" and a dozen other popular tableaux. He was an accurate costumier and he had an extraordinarily polished technique. His little interiors, with picturesque figures smoking, reading or playing cards, are so well done, in their way, that they will long be preserved

with respect. But the way of Meissonier was not the way of a great painter. His junior, Alphonse de Neuville, who was born in 1836 and died in 1885, had in him more of the true stuff of military art. Though he was unfitted to share to any serious extent in the conflict with Prussia, he was an alert looker-on, and his pictures have unquestionably put heart into the French patriot. They have done this through the energy in them, through their thoroughly dramatic illustration of well-chosen episodes. De Neuville could always be relied upon to tell an effective story, to bring out the heroism or pathos of this or that action in the war, and to do it with an easy skill. He had little of Meissonier's diabolical "finish," but he was just as careful in matters of nice detail, and he had greater breadth and freedom. His anecdotes have a vitality, a gusto, which the more renowned painter never knew. Yet he, too, like Meissonier, was first and last the clever Salonnier. That is the designation which befits also Edouard Detaille.

Detaille was Meissonier's favorite pupil and in some respects he bettered his master's example. He worked, generally, on a larger scale, drew with more flexibility, and got a little more *élan* into his studies of movement. He painted mural decorations as well as easel pictures, and in a very accomplished but rather prosaic fashion he satisfied to perfection what we may describe as the officially accredited taste of his time. It is one of the delightfullest phenomena

of French life, frequently commented upon in appreciative books of travel, that both in the Louvre and in the Salon one is always rubbing shoulders with the peasant and bourgeois. "Every one in France," we are told, "takes an intelligent interest in art." This is quite true, but it is well to distinguish, sometimes, where the intelligence and the interest are concerned. Both reach, on the whole, a remarkable average, but it is also true that France is full of folk who are beguiled, like myriads all over the world, by very ordinary appeals to their emotions. Detaille was an adept in reaching the hearts of his big audience. He put his soldiers truthfully upon canvas, in the right uniforms, with every buckle and button in the right place. The hero steps out with all the air of one carrying the baton of a future marshal in his knapsack. The flag is exalted proudly in the breeze. We hear the rattle of the drums. Victory lies ahead. And even defeat loses something of its sting when Detaille paints it. He could profit by the immortal lesson of "The Surrender of Breda," in which Velasquez shows how vanquished and conqueror could meet, like gentlemen. I recall from some old Salon a notable instance of Detaille's sympathy for a subject of the sort, a huge picture of a beleaguered fortress opening its gates to a successful but gallant and exquisitely courteous foe. There was nothing in it to irritate the *amour propre* of even the most irreconcilable of patriots. But in the mind of the disinterested

foreigner there would obtrude the thought that there was an element of complacency in the picture, a complacency reacting upon the whole fibre of the painter's work.

Like any other work of art that is really to touch us, a great military picture must proceed, after all, out of imagination and passion. Detaille, at bottom, was as cold as a stage carpenter. Consciously or unconsciously, he did more to flatter the national vanity than to minister to our sense of beauty. His was the photographically realistic ideal of Meissonier, enhanced, as I have said, by a bolder nervous force, but never quite released from the influence of a mechanical method. The zest disclosed in some of his casual, spontaneous drawings, evaporates when he works out a composition upon canvas. Then his figures seem to become standardized, in the manner of so much modern illustration, and to exercise the functions of the theatre rather than those of life. The colors, like the forms, are faithfully set down, and they are judiciously harmonized under the cold gray light of a Parisian studio. But we are not transported to the battle-field. We know all the time that we are in the Salon, looking at a good, typical Salon picture. By itself the fact is not, perhaps, deserving of any very serious or minute comment. But in its representative significance the work of Detaille commands attention and provokes some surprised reflections. Is it not an odd, arresting circumstance

that he, who did so much and did it so well, should nevertheless have failed to make himself a really brilliant master of his craft? Is it not equally strange that so many of his fellows, laboring ardently in the same field and supported, as he was, by the military enthusiasm of a great nation, should have failed to carry the soul of that nation into French art? The museums and other public buildings of the land are full of battle-pictures, and nowhere do these souvenirs of heroic deeds match their substance with their artistic form. This is surely one of the curiosities of painting.

VI

The Post-Impressionist Illusion

VI

THE POST-IMPRESSIONIST ILLUSION

It is said that when the former President of the French Republic, M. Fallières, went to the opening of the autumn Salon of 1912, he looked long at the paintings of the Cubists and Futurists. "Charming!" he murmured to the Under-Secretary for Fine Arts, who stood at his elbow, and then he added anxiously, "But you won't have to buy any for the state galleries, will you?" I know perfectly well how that anecdote must have been received whenever it was repeated in Post-Impressionist circles. "Oh, Fallières! But he was always a bourgeois, anyway." It so happens, however, that the solicitude of the French functionary has been shared by all kinds of people, including some quite competent artists; and I note this fact at the outset because the confusion in which the whole subject of Post-Impressionism has been enveloped has been rendered worse confounded by much foolish recrimination.

The Post-Impressionists themselves have not made most of the noise. This has been developed largely in print, and the hierophants of the "movement,"

which, as I shall presently endeavor to show, is not, strictly speaking, a movement at all, have made tremendous play with one of the favorite devices of those who traffic in the freakish things of art and letters. "Behold this masterpiece!" they say. "What! you see nothing in it? You find it ugly? Well, well, what a besotted idea of beauty you must have! Repose yourself before this canvas. It is saturated in beauty. You do not see it because you have the Philistine eye; but with patience and reverent study you may hope to unlock the secret of our great man." And so on, with many a delicate suggestion of compassionate good-will. It is an old trick. The playgoer who does not like dirty plays is denounced as a prude; the music-lover who resents cacophony is told he is a pedant; and in all these matters the final crushing blow administered to the man of discrimination is the ascription to him of a hidebound prejudice against things that are new because they are new. If he declines to be convinced of this, he is triumphantly reminded that all revolutionaries in the domain of thought, from Galileo and Columbus to Wagner and Manet, have been for a time persecuted and derided. *Ergo*, since the Post-Impressionists have provoked a vast amount of scornful mirth, they are necessarily great men.

It is not my purpose to laugh at them, nor do I wish to swell the flood of recrimination of which I have spoken. In the foregoing remarks I have sought

merely to clear the ground of the cant which often encumbers it. Let us look at Post-Impressionism for what it is, regardless alike of its acolytes and its equally furious opponents. I said just now that it was not a movement at all. A movement, I take it, represents in art, at all events, what men do when they are pretty closely allied by strong sympathies and by fidelity to a body of principles susceptible of some sort of definition. Such a group need not be wedded to a formula, but it cannot well avoid subscribing to a fairly definable scheme of ideas. Now, the best light that I have been able to extract from the vast welter of pronouncements made in and about the Post-Impressionist world lies in a saying of Emile Bernard, the intimate of Vincent van Gogh and, for a time, of Paul Gauguin. Bernard, himself a Post-Impressionist, modified to some extent by study of the old Venetian masters, has not only painted pictures, woven tapestries, and made architectural designs, but has written both poetry and prose. He published for about five years a periodical of his own, called *La Rénovation Esthétique*, and it bore this device: "There is neither ancient art nor modern art. There is art, which is to say the manifestation of the eternal ideal." Could anything be more comprehensive — or more vague? However, we must find out what the Post-Impressionists are driving at, and before we turn to the only conclusive documents in the case, namely, the works they have produced,

I may pass over a sea of ecstatic but muddled exposition and cite from Mr. Roger Fry, an English critic who has done much to further the propaganda in London, these not unhelpful words:

> All art depends upon cutting off the practical responses to sensations of ordinary life, thereby setting free a pure, and, as it were, disembodied function of the spirit; but, so far as the artist relies on the associated ideas of the objects which he represents, his work is not completely free and pure, since romantic associations imply at least an imagined practical activity.

There is a touch of mumbo-jumbo here, but there is a little aid in the passage, as I have said, inasmuch as it points to a queer kind of symbolism lurking at the bottom of the Post-Impressionist hypothesis. It is, I frankly confess, a difficult, if not an impossible, task to explain that hypothesis in terms that will be acceptable to the zealots, who, moreover, have always the easy retort that one has not understood their sublime mystery. But I must take the risk and state what, after careful study, I have gathered to be the Post-Impressionist aim. It is to eschew such approximately accurate representation of things seen as has been hitherto pursued by painters of all schools, and to cover the canvas with an arrangement of line and color symbolizing the very essence of the object or scene attacked. For some occult reason it is assumed that a portrait or picture painted according to the familiar grammar of art, understood of all men, is

clogged with irrelevant matter. The great masters of the past, to be sure, are not invalidated, and they need not be sent to the lumber-room; but their day is done, and with the Post-Impressionists we must slough off a quantity of played-out conventions before we can enter the promised land.

The temptation to go deeper into the metaphysics of the subject is not, I admit, very strong, for I do not like to chew sawdust, nor do I enjoy going down into a cellar at midnight without a candle to look for a black cat that isn't there, as the metaphysician, according to the witty Lord Bowen, is so often wont to go. And I have the best of reasons for refusing thus to weary either the reader or myself. The cat, I maintain, is not there. That is the nubbin of the whole argument. Post-Impressionism as a movement, as a ponderable theory, is, like the cat, an illusion. The portentous things we hear about it are not the adumbrations of an intelligible and precious truth, but are mere ex-parte assertions. This, I may be told, is itself no more than an assertion; but I do not offer it without the support of facts, and with these I am well supplied by the Post-Impressionists themselves.

To do them justice, I cannot discover that the "onlie begetters" of this curious affair in modern painting have bragged overmuch about harboring an authentic feline in their cellar. Mark how the present misunderstanding all began with the late Paul

Cézanne, who was born in 1839, the son of a Provençal banker. Duret tells about him in his book on Manet and the French Impressionists: how when he came up to Paris he fell into the arms of Zola; how he oscillated between Romanticism and Impressionism; and how, being a man of means, a comfortable bourgeois, he spent his life painting to please himself. He was an industrious man and covered many canvases. Light interested him, but he cared most for color. His style was rough to the point of brutality. Sometimes the object is clearly and handsomely realized in his work. More often it is lost in an obscurity of coarse, unlovely pigment. He is one of those types who convey the impression that they are feeling their way toward something large and beautiful, but never have fully mastered a sound technical method. Looking at Cézanne quietly and disinterestedly, one would recognize in him a rather crotchety man of talent, many of whose pictures should have been discarded as crude attempts. About none of them, good or bad, is there really any esoteric mystery. The mystery lies in the fuss that has been made over them, as over the tablets of a new evangel. Cézanne was simply an offshoot of the Impressionist School that we know, who never quite learned his trade, and accordingly, in his dealings with landscape, still life, and the figure, was not unaccustomed to paint nonsense. Nothing here to explain the Post-Impressionist furore. But Cézanne, the link be-

tween Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, does, through his complacency, give us some suggestion of the egotism and self-indulgence which were presently to set the Post-Impressionist ball rolling in good earnest.

These are the days of impossible beliefs, but not of lost causes, and the first belief engendered in the Post-Impressionist is an immeasurable belief in himself. What chiefly impresses me about him as a type is his conviction that what he chooses to do in art is right because he chooses to do it. This egotism is doubtless compatible with some engaging qualities. I have read the volume of letters written by Van Gogh to his friend Bernard, and I have read the latter's introductory pages. It is plain that these two were full of a candid enthusiasm for painting, keenly interested in the masters, ancient and modern, and ardently desirous of solving technical problems. But of each it may also be said that he had "too much ego in his cosmos," and in the case of Van Gogh, the result was disastrous. He, too, like Cézanne, made his lucky hits. Passionately in love with color, and groping toward an effective use of it in the expression of truth, he gives you occasionally in his thick impasto a gleam of sensuously beautiful tone. But as he grew more and more absorbed in himself, which is to say more and more indifferent to the artistic lessons of the centuries, his pictures receded further and further from the representation

of nature, and fulfilled instead an arbitrary, capricious conception of art. The laws of perspective are strained. Landscape and other natural forms are set awry. So simple an object as a jug containing some flowers is drawn with the uncouthness of the immature, even childish, executant. From the point of view of the Post-Impressionist prophet, all this may be referred to inventive genius beating out a new artistic language. I submit that it is explained rather by incompetence suffused with egotism. The man was unbalanced. Once, when he was staying at Arles, a girl of his acquaintance received from him a packet which she opened, expecting it to reveal a welcome present. She found that it contained one of the painter's ears, which he had that morning cut off with his razor. The incident is too horrible, intrinsically and in its suggestion of the most tragic of human ills, to be lightly employed for purposes of argument. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to affirm that the hero of this anecdote, who spent some time in an asylum and ultimately committed suicide, was unlikely to think straight. That has been the trouble with all the Post-Impressionists. They have not thought straight.

The thinking they have done, and they have done much, has been invertebrate and confusing. Steadily, too, it has led them to produce work not only incompetent, but grotesque. It has led them from complacency to what I can only describe as insolence. If

these seem hard words, let me recall an incident of the Post-Impressionist exhibition in London two years ago. Mr. Roger Fry, writing in defence of the project, cited various persons who were in sympathy with it, and named among them Mr. John S. Sargent. In the course of a letter to the London *Nation*, that distinguished painter said: "Mr. Fry may have been told — and have believed — that the sight of those paintings had made me a convert to his faith in them. The fact is that *I am absolutely sceptical as to their having any claim whatever to being works of art*, with the exception of some of the pictures by Gauguin that strike me as admirable in color, and in color only." The italics are mine, and I hope I may be pardoned for using them, for it is important, I think, that the testimony in this case of a master like Sargent should not be overlooked. There is another great painter to whom I like here to refer, the late John La Farge. In a letter of his which I have printed elsewhere, a letter to Mr. Henry Adams, he speaks of "that wild Frenchman — I should say stupid Frenchman. I mean Gauguin." He was, I know, interested in the painter, partly because Gauguin has been, like himself, in the South Seas. In this letter he speaks of the Frenchman's "wild" ways there, and adds, "All that seemed natural enough, stupid enough; and yet there was something of the man who has found something." Yes, Gauguin "found something." We have seen Sargent glancing in friendly wise at his color.

But La Farge, like Sargent, knew how to distinguish and he goes on to speak of "the peculiar shows which some of those good people indulge in," and dismisses the "tedious subject" with the remark, "They are driven to do something to attract attention, even their own attention."

It was not so with Cézanne, nor was it so with poor, tormented Vincent van Gogh. But Gauguin, with his raucous South Sea nudes and the later, more "symbolical," products of his brush, is not undeserving of La Farge's caustic and perhaps cynical comment. As for Matisse, and Picasso the Spaniard, with whom the more pronounced humors of Post-Impressionism come into view, their entanglement in the eccentricities of a kind of Barnumism is visible at a glance. These gentlemen have their predilections. Gauguin, whose imagination was touched by the noble bronze figures of the models he found in Tahiti and by the glow in their tropical background, has been all for form "grandly" and symbolically treated. Matisse has a kindred *flair*. In painting and sculpture he treats the nude with some particular resolution, so his high priests say, to get out of it beauty of line and rhythm. In rhythm, I am told, he is very strong. George Eliot speaks in one of her novels of the credulity in a guard which permits an interloper to get past him on the flimsiest of pretexts, and she adds, "There are some men so stupid that if you say, 'I am a buffalo,' they will let you pass." I have thought of

this when I have gone hunting for the line and rhythm of Matisse, and have marvelled at those critics who have, so to say, let them pass. It is, I believe, a matter of history that he has learned how to draw. But whatever his ability may be, it is swamped in the contortions of his misshapen figures. The fact is that real genius in these matters will out. Degas, who has been all his life a disciple of Ingres, uses a magic of draughtsmanship akin to that of his idol, though the style and spirit of his work are wholly his own. If Matisse were the demigod he is assumed to be, there would be at least some hints of an Olympian quality breathed through his *gauche* puerilities. Picasso, too, the great panjandrum of the Cubist tabernacle, is credited with profound gifts. Why does he not use them? And why must we sit patient, if not with awe-struck and grateful submissiveness, before a portrait or a picture seemingly representing a grotesque object made of children's blocks cut up and fitted together? This is not a movement, a principle. It is unadulterated "cheek."

Recently in Paris I saw an exhibition made by the Italian Futurists at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. I had long before been prepared in a measure for this experience by a wild and whirling "manifesto" sent out from Milan. But the most violent propositions of Signor Boccioni were surpassed by the phantasmagorias I was at last privileged to see for myself. These painters — and again I protest that I cannot

answer for the correctness of my report of their programme, for one cannot dissect a catharine-wheel in motion — appear to have got it into their heads that they could liquefy a subject in a picture into its emotional constituents. (The repetition of this phrase three times, by moonlight, may help the reader a little.) The Bernheim-Jeune gallery was thronged every day with people who came to see how the trick was done. What they saw was a series of canvases bearing intelligible titles, but otherwise resembling patchworks of color. In the strange mosaic of crude reds, blues, yellows, and so on, one could make out part of a head, the smoke-stack of a locomotive, a man's hand and cuff, the legs of a table, or something that might have been a flower or a fruit. One of the pictures — one of Boccioni's own, was called "Laughter," and in it there was something that, for a Futurist, made a fairly credible head; but the rest was chaos.

The name of these "revolutionaries" is legion, and many of them have their distinctive absurdities, but they are all united on one point. Post-Impressionist, Cubist, or Futurist, however they may be designated, their cue is to turn the world upside down. One interesting outcome of their common foible is a curious family likeness running through their productions. That sterling painter, beloved of painters, the Belgian Alfred Stevens, once asked a dryly satirical question. "Why," he said, "have those persons who im-

agine they invented Impressionism nearly all the same impression before Nature? It seems to me that it should be the contrary." The reflection may justly be applied to Post Impressionism and the allied aberrations of contemporary painting. Gauguin and Bernard quarrelled as to who "got there first." But the point is negligible, for if the whole dreary business is deficient in anything, it is deficient in individuality. I make no excuse for ignoring a multitude of names in this brief survey. Why dwell upon names that mean nothing?

It is the dull sterility of this so-called "movement" that offers the chief point of attack for those who resent its intrusion into the field of art. Let the Post-Impressionists and their loquacious friends wax eloquent among themselves as to what constitutes beauty and what they may mean by the theories through which they assume to develop its secret. Their debatings are worthless so long as they go on producing flatly impossible pictures and statues. The oracular assertion that the statues and the pictures are beautiful and great is merely so much impudence and "bounce." It is, after all, a little cool for ill-equipped experimenters to take themselves so seriously. The dabster in music or the drama or literature is usually expected to acquire some proficiency in his medium before he undertakes to speak out. By some mysterious dispensation, which no one yet has accounted for, the artist, and especially the

painter, is early let loose upon the world, whether he has acquired a decent training or not.

Here, from the incomplete, halting methods of Cézanne, there has flowed out of Paris into Germany, Russia, England, and to some slight extent the United States, a gospel of stupid license and self-assertion which would have been swept into the rubbish-heap were it not for the timidity of our mental habit. When the stuff is rebuked as it should be, the Post-Impressionist impresarios and fuglemen insolently proffer us a farrago of supersubtle rhetoric. The farce will end when people look at Post-Impressionist pictures as Mr. Sargent looked at those shown in London, "absolutely sceptical as to their having any claim whatever to being works of art."

VII

A Memorable Exhibition

VII

A MEMORABLE EXHIBITION

I

THERE was an exhibition in New York, held from the middle of February to the middle of March, 1913, in the Armory of the 69th Regiment, which deserves a place by itself in the history of such matters. Unprecedented thousands went to see it and of these some said that its effect, if it had any, would quickly pass, others that it marked a crucial turning-point in our artistic affairs if not in American art. Time alone can show which was the correct view, but the very nature of the episode, its significance as a challenge, inclines me to give some account of it here, with a few notes on what the exhibition contained. The Association of American Painters and Sculptors, which was responsible for the undertaking, did far more than provide the public with a novel entertainment; it set everybody to thinking of current conditions in art, and that alone is an achievement worth remembrance. Fully to appreciate the point it is necessary, perhaps, to glance at the circumstances leading up to this event.

Miscellaneous exhibitions, and more particularly

those for which artists are asked to submit their works to a jury, are in art very much what small, local campaigns are in politics. They disturb neighborly calm. Men's souls are tried, not tragically, perhaps, but in little ways that are sometimes more irritating than a real crisis could be. It is difficult, very difficult, to philosophize the subject. That the emotions and opinions of *A*, whose picture is hung on the line, of *B*, who is "skied," and of *C*, who is politely requested to take his masterpiece away, are all determined by personal considerations, is a manifestly superficial view of the situation to take. We may be sure that *A*, at any rate, looks at it wholly in the dry light of reason. He knows that juries are infallible. Be that as it may, we are certain of one thing, and that is that the story of all such exhibitions as I have in mind is but one long sequence of secessions, and in this regard New York has in no wise differed from Paris, London, Munich and every other European capital. Indeed the historian curious in dates might even hope to demonstrate that we were leaders in the fashion. It was in the seventies that the Society of American Artists was created, out of protest against the Academy of Design (only to be reabsorbed into that body, in the fulness of time) and it was because the Society didn't measure up to their ideals of administrative perfection that the Ten American Painters went off to exhibit by themselves. There have been other instances of revolt, and in recent

years certain of the younger men have in one way or another contrived to have their little fling, "by their wild lones," untrammelled by pontifical juries. I need not pause on their grievances or on what, precisely, they have hitherto done to redress them. It is enough to say that these "Independents," keen upon having their own way, have done a good deal to put into the air the idea that "freedom" is not as wide-spread in the world of American art as it ought to be, and that something should be done clearly to establish a more liberal, more open-minded and sympathetic attitude toward every "new" thing. It was toward the advancement of this principle that the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, itself a new body, directed its efforts when it set out to make what soon came to be known simply as the Armory show. For the sake of the record I like to give here the names of the members, as printed in the catalogue.

Karl Anderson
George Bellows
D. Putnam Brinley
J. Mowbray-Clarke
Leon Dabo
Jo Davidson
Arthur B. Davies
Guy Pene Du Bois
Sherry E. Fry
William J. Glackens
Robert Henri
E. A. Kramer
Walt Kuhn
Ernest Lawson
Jonas Lie
George B. Luks
Elmer L. MacRae
Jerome Myers
Frank A. Nankivell
Bruce Porter
Maurice Prendergast
John Sloan
Henry Fitch Taylor
Allen Tucker
Mahonri Young

The best thing that these artists could do to enlist public support for their enterprise they did a month or more before the Armory doors were opened when they authorized their president, Mr. Arthur B. Davies, to issue the following statement:

On behalf of the executive committee I desire to explain the general attitude of the association. . . . This is not an institution, but an association. It is composed of persons of varying tastes and predilections, who are agreed on one thing—that the time has arrived for giving the public here the opportunity to see for themselves results of new influences at work in other countries in an art way. In getting together the works of the European moderns the society has embarked on no propaganda. It proposes to enter on no controversy with any institution. Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures and so on on exhibition, so that the intelligent may judge for themselves by themselves. Of course, controversies will arise, just as they have arisen under similar circumstances in France, Italy, Germany and England. But they will not be the result of any stand taken by this association as such. On the other hand, we are perfectly willing to assume full responsibility for providing the opportunity to those who may take one side or the other. Any individual expression of opinion contrary to the above is at variance with the official resolution of this association.

This candid and dignified declaration would have been welcome anywhere. For the time, and place, it was ideal. Some of the exhibitions of foreign art which have been brought to the city have been introduced with sickening outbursts of utterly uncritical laudation. The spasmodic school is out of date. New York is not Little Pedlington, and the numerous

people who take a serious interest in works of art should not be affronted by the bland assumption that they have not the intelligence to judge for themselves but must unquestioningly swallow whole, as precious masterpieces, whatever is put before them. Furthermore, indiscriminate praise is not only impertinent but helps to expose the more painfully the weakness of the given case. The discreet words used by Mr. Davies promised both to win a friendly reception for his cause and to further right thinking on the whole subject. And they were made good.

It was a fine and stirring exhibition. The collection of about a thousand examples of modern art included some of the most stupidly ugly pictures in the world and not a few pieces of sculpture to match them. But while these undoubtedly made the "sensation" of the affair it was plain that the latter was organized with no sensational purpose, and it was not freakish violence that gave the collection as a whole its tone. That tone was determined by nothing more nor less than a healthy independence in most of the types represented. The merely eccentric artists occupied a comparatively subordinate position. If at first this did not seem to be so it was only because things that are bizarre naturally make themselves conspicuous. When one came to explore the vast acreage of wall space one was struck by the large proportion of works which, whether good or bad, had nothing subversive about them. I lay stress

upon this sanity prevailing in the show because I would do justice to the disinterested aim of the men responsible for it and because, after all, one likes to testify to the truth. A great deal of the criticism directed against the exhibition had its origin in the distress and wrath of those who saw the silly pictures and sculptures there—and flatly ignored everything else. I saw the rubbish and hated it. But I know the show included much else.

The first broad impression received was deeply interesting. The huge floor space in the Armory was admirably utilized by the erection of partitions forming fifteen or eighteen octagonal rooms, some larger than others, but all of generous dimensions. Covered with burlap the ample spaces thus made available provided a good background which the hanging committee employed to excellent advantage. So far as the ensemble was concerned the pictures were well hung. In one respect the arrangement might have been improved. A rough principle of grouping was followed, so that in many instances the works of a given exhibitor were kept together, but this system was not rigidly enough applied. There were some unfortunate dislocations of individual effect, and I wished, too, that the historical part of the collection had been more carefully isolated, with particular artists assigned to more clearly defined sections. But all this amounted to no more than a really unimportant question of practical convenience.

Chronologically the exhibition began with Ingres, and since he was to be included it was a pity that the Association did not get hold of some more representative things of his. His share in the show was, as it happened, practically negligible, and it would have been interesting, from the educational point of view which the organizers had in mind, if the public could have been shown just what was the situation in which he marked the parting of the ways nearly a hundred years ago. First a follower and then a critic of David, he illustrates a partial modernizing of the classical tradition; in his art we sense the first breath of the new life which was to animate French painting. Then, in his time the Romanticists arise, properly represented at the Armory by his great rival, Delacroix, and after their peculiarly personal conflict comes the general war. At this point the show weakened a little. Courbet was present but Millet was missing, and the whole Barbizon group suffered a curious neglect. I surmise, however, that to the men who gathered all these pictures together the landscape-painters of 1830 did not seem quite revolutionary enough. They were at greater pains to bring the Impressionists into their scheme, Manet, Monet, and the rest, not forgetting Degas. It was where those painters left off that the American contingent may be said to have begun on this occasion, artists like Mr. Alden Weir, the late John H. Twachtman and Mr. Childe Hassam heading the native list. Thence the

lines of development set forth were for some time conservative enough and the visitor realized that prevailing tone of intelligent workmanship to which I have referred above. It was, indeed, only as the chronological sequence brought us fairly close to the present day, and so up to the verge of to-morrow, that wrong-headed nonsense came into view.

Be it said to the credit of our countrymen that their indulgence in egotistical fatuity has as yet been slight. A few of them swagger about, so to say, making portentous use of their new-found "independence," but, frankly, it is not to them that the show owed such fantasticality as it possessed. This was to be ascribed to the French Post-Impressionists and Cubists, with a few of their Spanish, German, Italian and Russian fellows. Those whirling dervishes, seeking, like the Fat Boy in "Pickwick," to make our flesh creep, succeeded only too easily amongst some observers, though it is hard to see why they should have been taken so seriously. The Cubist agglomerations of line and color possess, sometimes, expressive qualities. It is like the monstrous potato or gourd which the farmer brings to the village store to see if his cronies can make out in certain "bumps" which he indicates the resemblance that he has found to General Grant or the late P. T. Barnum. It is even more like what one would contemplate if a perfectly respectable wombat, finding himself in the midst of one of those gigantic colored vessels which

stand in a druggist's window, should suddenly go quite mad, thrashing about him and causing great havoc. "We are all going to heaven," said the dying Gainsborough, "and Van Dyck is of the company." The Post-Impressionist and the Cubist, with their ecstatic acolytes, would emulate in their way this note of proud conviction. But before the evidences they offer of their right to be called artists, and original creative artists at that, I am only reminded of the Western lady who, for the first time, showed her new drawing-room, a tragic jumble of tawdry decoration, to one of her friends, saying, "This is our Louis Quinze room." Quoth the friend, "What makes you think so?"

II

There was so much that was good in this exhibition that it was vexatious to be delayed on the way to it by a quantity of worse than meretricious material; but I must say something about the latter, and about the "gush" that promptly set in when it appeared. The Association made one slip. It reprinted Mr. Davies' statement, which I have already quoted, in the catalogue, but this time there were added some remarks from another hand, and among them this one: "The foreign paintings and sculptures here shown are regarded by the committee of the Association as expressive of the forces which have been at work abroad of late, *forces which cannot be ignored*

because they have had results." The italics are mine. Why, I wonder, was it deemed necessary to raise an issue? One could only remind the writer that a bull in a china shop is also notoriously productive of "results." A straw to show which way the wind was blowing in other quarters was provided by another commentator, writing of what he had observed at the press view. "I never heard a crowd of people," he said, "talk so much about meaning and about life, and so little about technique, values, tone, drawing, perspective, studies in blue, in white, etc." That bit of concrete evidence beautifully exposed the fallacy which misled and completely obfuscated many too confiding observers. It touched the crux of the whole problem. To go to any exhibition with a solicitude "about meaning and about life" at the expense of matters of technique is not simply to beg the question; it is to give it away with both hands. In art, elements of "meaning" and "life" do not exist until the artist has mastered those technical processes by which he may or may not have the genius to call them into being. This is not an opinion. It is a statement of fact. To exclude technique from art is no more possible than it is to dispense in architecture with ponderable substances. If I emphasize the point it is because we have here the one chief source of danger. What the student of these strange "isms" needs to be warned against is the specious argument that he cannot test them by any

principles of criticism hitherto known to him, but must look at a picture as though it were something else, and admire it for qualities which he cannot see in it but must take on faith. There are numbers of nominally intelligent persons who seem really to believe that such an hypothesis is defensible.

That there is no mystery about Post-Impressionism and the like students were helped to realize at the Armory by the scope of the exhibition. All they needed to do was to approach the subject with some system, looking first at the examples of Impressionism as it was understood by Manet, Monet and their circle. Such an experience is very simply instructive. It is not alone old familiarity with the works of these men which makes the inquirer feel at peace in their presence. He sees at once that, while they changed their manner of handling pigment from that common to the members of the Barbizon school, their principal innovation, which was that of giving the light of the open air its full value in a picture, involved no departures from the broad grammar of art. In composition, in form, in matters of human expression, they sought, as generations of their predecessors had sought, to record the truths of nature. Now let us turn from their paintings to those in which a new philosophy of art is supposed to have been announced; let us turn to the paintings of Cézanne. This well-to-do Frenchman, who, as I have shown elsewhere in this volume, had no pot-boilers to paint, but could

use his brush for his own amusement, had in him, despite wholesome personal traits, the taint of the amateur. He had some feeling for landscape and the figure. He groped toward an expressive treatment of form, and in his nudes you can dimly make out some rather handsome intentions, just as in his landscapes you can just discern the aims of a colorist and a designer. But Cézanne's dreams didn't "come true" and this not because he was in the throes of some new, abstruse conception of art, but because he simply did not know his trade. There are no esoteric glories about Cézanne, hidden from the vulgar. He was merely a second-rate Impressionist who had now and then fair luck in painting a moderately good picture, but would never have come into fame at all if the dealers had not taken him up and there had not been the usual band of scribes ready to applaud something new. Calverley, in one of the drollest of his poems, celebrates the casual organ-grinder, and chooses this theme, so he quaintly tells us, "for a change." Something of this sort happened to Cézanne. The only mystery we have to reckon with in his case lies in the fuss that has been made about him. With Vincent Van Gogh, the Dutch painter whose mind gave way and who died by his own hand, we are still more or less in the sphere of simple Impressionism, but in his technic he diverges a little into paths of his own, using a heavy impasto and handling his color in masses. He continues Monet's

theory of light, but in his treatment of form he has nothing of that master's skill. His figures, like his flowers or his trees, are brutally painted. Perhaps the best piece of his in this exhibition was the landscape called "Moulin de Montmartre." It was a simple impression of nature, it contained good light and color, and the style, or, rather, the slow, solid method of laying on the paint, made the work amusing to the student of technique. There was, too, a study of poppies which showed that he was capable of expressing the character of a flower and of getting in the process some good tone. But having made these few remarks there is, in all seriousness, nothing further to be said about Van Gogh. No doubt if we were to discuss the personality of the man, his adventures, his ideas on old and modern methods and so on, he would prove a mildly interesting topic. The volume of his letters published in Paris by his old comrade Emile Bernard, and the similar collection which has been brought out in English, are well worth reading. But do not let us be distracted from the main issue. That was clearly presented in the group of some twelve or fifteen paintings in the Armory exhibition, paintings which were excellently representative, and, I repeat, all that they had to tell us was that Van Gogh was a moderately competent Impressionist, who was heavy-handed, had little if any sense of beauty and spoiled a lot of canvas with crude, quite unimportant pictures.

Gauguin is in practically the same case. The point to remember here, too, is that we have no concern with Gauguin's adventures in the South Sea Islands or elsewhere, with his more or less elaborated "principles," with any "movement" to which he has given impetus, or with any of the high-erected "thoughts" that some of the critics have had about him. The bald question is, "Does he know how to paint?" The answer, if not absolutely in the negative, is hardly more encouraging. He, like Paul Cézanne and Van Gogh, interested himself in landscape and in form, and he brought to the treatment of them some technical aptitude, some sense of color. But he did not complete his education. There is, I insist once more, nothing mysterious here. Gauguin is nothing more or less than the mediocre technician, trying to do something which he cannot quite accomplish. Of course, he has passages of modelling, of draughtsmanship and of rich warm color. Why not? These are within the reach of any man of fair talent. But no serious work of art was ever yet based on a few scattered passages. Why, then, must we take Gauguin seriously? The truth is that there is no reason why we should do anything of the sort. There lies the key to the whole absurdity. The spectator who uses a little common sense and disdains to be browbeaten by the Post-Impressionist hierophants will simply face things as they are, recognize a poorly painted picture when he sees one and let it go at that. He

will do this, moreover, even when the plot thickens and he follows the development of Post-Impressionism into its last stages and beyond. As matters grow worse he will note, too, that what is chiefly promoting the declension upon artistic chaos is so every-day a thing as egotistical impudence. Cézanne and Van Gogh paint as poorly as they do, one surmises, because they cannot help themselves. Gauguin's vagaries seem to a considerable extent wilful. Those of Matisse are unmistakably attributable to an indurated complacency.

It was once said of a young fellow who thought a little too well of himself that he couldn't have been born with his "cheek"; he must have acquired it. It is not credible that Matisse has not known just what he was about. There is a legend to the effect that the man had some academic ability, and it is easy to believe that once, at all events, he knew how to draw. Vaguely, beneath what is monstrous in the paintings by him in this exhibition, one discerned the grasp upon form and movement which a man has when he has been trained in the rudiments and has used his eyes. But first going after some will-o'-the-wisp leading him into ways of wanton ugliness, and then, I infer, persuading himself that he had a "mission," Matisse proceeded to paint his nudes and his studies of still life not with the naïveté of a child, but with the forced simplicity of an adult playing a trick. In the process he would appear to

have relinquished all respect for technique, all feeling for his medium, to have been content to daub his canvas with linear and tonal coarseness. The bulbous, contorted bodies in his figure pieces are in no wise expressive of any new and rationalized canon of form. They are false to nature, they are ugly as the halting efforts of the veriest amateur are ugly, and, in short, their negation of all that true art implies is significant of just the smug complacency to which I have alluded. Whether through laziness or through ignorance, Matisse has come to the point where he feels that in painting an interior like his "Panneau Rouge," or nudes like "Les Capucines" or "Le Luxe," he is exercising the function of an artist, and, of course, there are crowds of half-baked individuals who are ready to tell him that he is right. As a matter of fact, these things are not works of art; they are feeble impertinences. To those who would forthwith prate of some hidden virtue in them I would give counsel similar to that proffered by the host whose guest had dined a little too flamboyantly, and at the moment of departure was asking where he could find a cab. "You will find two cabs at the corner," was the reply. "Take the first one. The second one isn't there."

The types thus far traversed, though steadily receding from the technical propriety which I noted as characteristic of the Impressionists who gave us our point of departure, have been willing to subscribe to the axiom that form is form. Cézanne, Van Gogh,

Gauguin and Matisse, each marking a further drift away from the facts of the visible world, have yet confessed to the dominance of fact as fact to the extent of making a man, say, look more or less like a man. But I have warned the reader of how the plot thickens, and especially of the effect that "cheek" has had upon the process. When we bid farewell to Matisse, whose nudes, preposterous as they are, yet suggest the forms of men and women, we find ourselves in the company of "revolutionaries" who are not dealing with form as we understand it at all. With them a man begins to look like something else, preferably like some mass of faceted or curved little bodies thrown together in a heap. The Cubist steps in and gives us not pictures but so many square yards of canvas, treated as though they were so many square yards of wall-paper. But the Cubist wants to eat his cake and have it, too. He paints you his riddle of line and color, and then, as in the case of M. Marcel Duchamp, calls it "Nude Descending a Staircase." In other words, he has the effrontery to assert that his "picture" bears some relation to human life. Who shall argue with him? For my part I flatly refuse to offer him the flattery of argument. According to the Spanish proverb it is a waste of lather to shave an ass, and that criticism of the Cubists is thrown away which does not deny at the outset their right to serious consideration. Are we to be at great pains to explain that a chunk of marble

is not a statue? Are we elaborately to demonstrate that a battered tin can is not in the same category with a goblet fashioned by Cellini? Are we to accept these Cubists as painters of pictures because they have covered canvas with paint? Are they indeed "forces which cannot be ignored because they have had results"? These "results" have nothing to do with art. Why should they not be ignored?

Every one knows how easy it is to gather a crowd in a city street. All you have to do is to stand on a corner and look up at the chimney-pot on a tall building. In five minutes you are the centre of an eager, curious throng. It is no new thing for the artist to profit by this expedient. Years ago the clever Frenchman learned how to paint the big sensational picture which "made a hole in the wall" and caused everybody to stop and gape. Post-Impressionism saw the efficacy of this trick and decided to "go it one better." Cubism has merely carried the thing to its logical conclusion. And the crowd on the corner has swelled to astonishing dimensions. It requires no profound initiation to see the wisdom of passing on and leaving the crowd to waste its time. I cannot too often repeat the statement that there is really nothing grand, gloomy and peculiar about these freak pictures. Conscientiously I examined them all, and, frankly, could not even find reason for distinguishing between one exemplar of the new "movement" and another. Why, indeed, should we pay

M. Duchamp the compliment of detaching him from the company of M. Paul Picasso? There is no essential difference between M. Dunoyer de Segonzac's "Une Bucolique," a study of nudes from which one would omit the "bu," and the "Improvization" of M. Wassily Kandinsky, which reminded me of nothing so much as of some fragments of refuse thrown out of a butcher's shop upon a bit of canvas. To say of Mme. Jacqueline Marval's "Odalisques au Miroir" that the nude figures in it looked like so many wax dolls badly drawn, to note the resemblance between M. Georges Rouault's study of a nude woman and a bunch of overripe plums, is surely not to indicate any really interesting artistic development. To go step by step through the long list would be a wearisome and unprofitable task. It is the weariness that is peculiarly significant. After all, the chief trouble about Post-Impressionism and Cubism is that they are such a bore. There is for a moment a little fun in them. A first glimpse of a piece of sculpture like, say, Archipanko's "Family Life" inevitably provokes a smile. But enough is as good as a feast. There was a parlous lot of this sort of thing in the exhibition, and it soon lost its power to amuse.

III

The Armory show, as I indicated at the beginning, was nothing if not a source of stimulus, a challenge

to criticism, and one of the most helpful things it did was very urgently to invite us to take stock, so to say, of American art in so far as it was there represented. Native work filled most of the space and quite apart from this physical fact it was obvious that we had to reckon with the Independents; with those of our artists who are working, or at all events believe they are working, in the van. What, then, are they doing and what is it worth? These were the really pressing questions developed by the show. In seeking to answer them it is well to begin, as in the preceding notes, at the beginning, which is to say with French Impressionism. There were some fine examples of the school on the walls, from which the student could easily see what it was that set some of our own painters upon a new path. Manet showed them the virtues of pure color, applied in bold, direct fashion, but at the outset Monet is the more suggestive type. He it was who taught us the vibration of color under the light of the open air, and it was in emulation of his broken tones and his pervasive luminosity that our latter-day innovators found their account. Several of them were represented on this occasion, and on the whole Mr. Alden Weir was the hero of the group. They are all types of high ability. It is interesting to note how the pictures by the late J. H. Twachtman and the late Theodore Robinson held their own in the company of masters like Manet, Monet, and Whistler. Mr. Childe Hassam, too, richly

exemplified the ease and effectiveness with which the Impressionistic hypothesis was adopted here. But without drawing up anything so futile as a class list or making any invidious comparisons I may nevertheless choose Mr. Weir as a peculiarly helpful source of light on our problem.

What was the value of French Impressionism to American art? Its value could only be that of a means to an end, of an influence fertilizing individualized work. Mr. Weir's pictures gave the perfect proof. I can well remember this artist's earlier experiments in the open air, how indecisive they were, and how poor a substitute for the method he had previously employed. As time went on and successive exhibitions revealed the steps in his progress it seemed as if he would never conclusively master the new principles. Then, through sheer "keeping at it," he demonstrated his essential authority. The old hesitations fell away, the note of imitation absolutely disappeared, and it was obvious that Weir was not to be designated even as an Impressionist, but just as an original painter. He had made his Impressionism a means to an end, a means of expressing himself. That is why the panel containing four or five of his pictures in this exhibition enforced perhaps the best lesson that the latter afforded.

He exercises the true function of the artist, which is to learn his trade and then produce beautiful pictures. He does not make a fetich of his method. He

is not enslaved by his pigment. Impressionism was not with him a formula to be trotted out again and again for its own sake. It was simply one more string to his bow, or, if I may change the figure, a kind of unconscious accretion, enriching his talent without altering its fundamental direction. That direction in the work of Alden Weir is steadily toward beauty, toward charm. And observe how his assimilation and control of the Impressionist idea as part, not the whole, of his equipment has left him his freedom. He does not repeat himself nor is his range in any way restricted. In his little group of paintings there was a flower-piece, there was a landscape, there were a couple of portraits. In each one of these works he made you feel that he had been really stirred by his theme and had managed to express its very spirit. To each one he gave a distinctive character. What was the result? You marked him at once as not only a man of technique but a man of style. It was in the latter capacity more particularly that he provided an invaluable touchstone wherewith to test quantities of other things in the show. It was not the new method, freakish or otherwise, that drew one to this or that episode; it was the use made of a given method, the development out of it of those finer, more personal effects which spell not a factitious "movement" but a creative force.

Pursuing the search for this precious phenomenon one was conscious at the back of his mind of a good

deal that had happened prior to the opening of this exhibition. One remembered certain shows and the talk that went on about them, the assertion of individuality outraged by academic ill-treatment, the cry for wider liberty, for more generous encouragement. Back of all this one understood there struggled a band of artists, most of them still young, who were dissatisfied with prevailing traditions and insisted upon speaking out in their own way. We have seen how Weir, Hassam and others profited by the example of Monet when that was comparatively fresh. They have gone on in sedate mood toward their broadened horizon, and unnumbered American artists have followed their leadership. But the Independents, coming later upon the scene, have sought an even more advanced tradition. I wonder if to them a man like Weir now seems old-fashioned? This would seem not unlikely, for the newer school is out of sympathy with his fastidious taste. It cares nothing for beauty as he understands it and nothing for suavity of surface. It reverts to Impressionism, inasmuch as it takes a leaf from Manet's book, but, as it happens, that is only the leaf which relates to directness of statement. In borrowing that motive the Independents, as though bent upon a kind of wilful defiance, brutalize it to an extraordinary extent. The key-note to the current mode is nothing more or less than an exaltation of manual dexterity, accompanied by what I can only describe as a gross flouting of the artistic

convenances. It is as though the artist wanted you to understand that he knew how to use his brushes, but had no nonsense about him and would not be caught permitting a trace of sensuous or spiritual beauty to creep into his work.

There is no link between our earlier Impressionism and these recent outcroppings of rebellion. The latter have no place in any sequence of artistic events, in any evolution of ideas. They simply stand for a sharp and, on the whole, sudden break with the existing order of things. So to consider them is in no wise to disparage them. A swift, violent change is not in itself necessarily harmful. But neither is there anything talismanic about it; neither is it necessarily a cause of good art, and in saying this I come pretty close to the secret of our Independents, and, by the same token, to an understanding of what they fail to do. Consideration of what they have failed to do has been rather forced upon us by the general drift of all that agitation which has been going forward for the last few years. One assumes that a new movement has tangible things to say for itself, that the men behind it, being unmistakably in revolt against constituted authority, have principles of their own to put in the place of those which they regard as outworn. Now, it is not clear that the Independents have any constructive campaign laid out or that they are doing anything to impugn the validity of what has gone before them. On the contrary, in

going back into the studio and practically abandoning the magic of sunlight they would seem to have retrograded from the point at which modern art was left by the French Impressionists. Instead of extending and enriching the gamut of color they have cramped it within narrower limits. Their pure tints are often also ugly, opaque tints. A surprising number of the pictures in the Armory show were either swamped in dull black or brown tones or went to the other extreme and split the welkin with the raucous row of their high-pitched crudities. Yet everybody was terribly in earnest. One could not help feeling that they had put their heart into their work. These are artists passionately convinced that they are going somewhere, that they are going forward. What is it that they have unconsciously done, then, to make the spectator doubtful? In a vague tremor lest they descend upon prettiness they have shunned beauty. Fearful of drawing like Academicians they draw like navvies. Suspicious of the lure of poetry, which they imagine must have something "literary" about it, they give themselves up to the baldest kind of prose.

There is no denying that this "rough and ready" conception of art promotes at once a feeling of disappointment, and even of distress. It is painful to have to admit that the Independents have brought nothing really new into the field, that they have no alluring dreams to share with us, that they are practically innocent of the gift that is so precious in art,

the gift of invention. But it is just at this point that criticism must be on its guard against the insidious temptation to ask an artist to be something that he was never intended to be. Could anything be sillier or more unjust than to blame a Sargent, say, for not being a Botticelli? The foregoing remarks, exposing what the Independents lack, have been offered with a purely descriptive purpose. Having thus cleared the ground, one is free to express the warmest appreciation of the two highly important virtues which do most to stiffen their back-bone, the virtues of energy and truth. As regards the second of these, I must add, to be sure, a certain qualification. That prosaic mood to which I have just referred leads to a quaint misconception as to subject. The Independents are too exclusively absorbed in the delineation of every-day, and even squalid, types. It is wise for the artist to paint what goes on about him, but New York life, for example, is not confined to the East Side or to Bohemia. Velasquez began by painting the humble figures of his *bodegones*, the peasants and water-carriers of Seville, but it was not long before he dedicated himself to the portrayal of kings. The fact that we are interested in a caterpillar need not prevent our delighting in a butterfly. But this I note in passing. Once we have granted the Independents their preoccupation with not very attractive models, we may admire the zest and the skill with which they do their work. There we have the final source of

the genuine pleasure that was extracted from this exhibition. It was inspiriting to come in contact with a company of artists so sincerely desirous of keeping their eyes upon the object, to paint it with unflinching fidelity to nature, and so manfully willing to let themselves go.

It hardly matters at all, from this point of view, that they have added nothing to our store of artistic ideas. To be genuine is to be of some significance in the world, and the honest robust vigor of these men is by itself enough to inspire sympathy. Furthermore, to note their poverty of invention is not by any means to say that they are bankrupt of personality, that indispensable ingredient of good art. Though it is impossible here to traverse the show in detail, minutely appraising picture after picture in a portentously large collection, I must pause if only for a moment on one or two leading types. I cannot ignore the distinction and the power which Mr. Davies showed in his "Design: Birth of Tragedy," and in another drawing of a seated figure which hung near by. In him, for once at least, we meet a man of ideas and a man with distinction of style. There was good reason, too, for lingering before the four or five paintings by George Bellows. His "Docks in Winter," his "Polo Crowd" and his "Circus" stamped him as an artist with an outlook of his own, a powerful technique, the makings of a style, and a dynamic force which stirs us as we are stirred by some trium-

phant masculine gesture. In his work, too, as in much else that the exhibition contained, we find the note of character. Human beings are portrayed as such by him. If the Independents accomplish any reform in contemporary American art, it promises to be the abolition of the lay-figure and the ruthless sweeping away of a vast amount of studio rubbish, the irrelevant accessories which are dragged into so many pictures as by main strength. They are not masters yet, these painters such as Bellows, Luks, Glackens, Sloan, Myers, and a dozen others, and if it had anything to do with my present purpose, I could without any difficulty indicate errors in this or that painting. But no matter how many mistakes are made, we rarely encounter amongst the works of these men the disastrous mistake of painting men and women as so much still life.

Of that pitfall the Independents scarcely need to be wary. Their avoidance of it is instinctive. There is no necessity of warning Mr. Guy Pene Du Bois against the manikin. His little studies of New York types, full of technical promise, also show that he has the root of the matter in him and is feeling his way toward the very essence of character. But there is one danger to which many if not all of the Independents are exposed, and that is the danger of scorning one formula, only to become hidebound in the cultivation of another. The reflection is invited especially by a painter like Mr. Robert Henri. In his re-

vival of the mode of Manet he has done a good quantity of prodigiously clever work. Technically he is one of the most sophisticated and able of our painters, and when he is in precisely the right mood, as when he made the portrait of a child called "The Red Top," he gives us a lasting satisfaction. This is technique that is worth while, technique wreaked upon a little slice of life and somehow endued with the breath of individuality. But when we contemplate this artist's "Figure in Motion," a full-length nude, it is in no spirit of paradox that we think automatically of a *chef d'école* like Bouguereau. At bottom this motive, like the motive characteristic of the French Academician, savors of the well-worn studio mechanism. It is professorial work, sound in its way, like Bouguereau's, but still professorial. One divines the proficient teacher, sure of his recipe, knowing so well how to draw and model in just that way, but in the long run transmitting to the pupil only a certain uninspired adroitness. There is no personality here. Neither is there any style. The figure lives and moves, no doubt, and yet as a work of art the canvas seems empty. That, I repeat, is what the Independents have to fear. The artist cannot live by manual dexterity alone. He must think and feel, and, above all, he must strongly individualize what he does. Whether this memorable Salon is to prove a really helpful and constructive influence or is presently to be forgotten as having provided no more than the

passing sensation of a winter, depends altogether upon the seriousness of the changes flowing from it. Are the Independents to repeat, each man in his own way, Mr. Weir's deeply significant experience? Are they to use their technique in the highest service of that truth and energy in which they are so rich, and prove that they have something to say to which people of discrimination are willing to listen? They cannot burke these questions, and, if the wholesome atmosphere of the exhibition goes for anything, they will not try to.

IV

It was a pleasant thing to be released from a systematic examination of this exhibition, to drift about and enjoy certain pieces for themselves, regardless of their relation, if they had any, to a school or a movement. My final sheaf of impressions, thus gathered, embraced works of art old and new, some of which wore an almost classical air and others which, if in no wise revolutionary, were at any rate significant of progressive ideals. Among the familiar friends the first and most arresting was Puvis de Chavannes, who was represented by some beautiful paintings and drawings. It was good to see again his famous "La Décollation de Saint Jean-Baptiste," that perfect souvenir of his state of mind in 1869, when his predilection for the naïve simplicity of the Italian Primitives was not incompatible with a certain rude dramatic

force and a rich quality in his pigment. There was, too, in his little "Femme Nue," another delightful page from his earlier history, a page in which simple realism is faintly touched but not yet transmogrified by the grand style to which he was ultimately to dedicate his genius. Puvis steadily simplified as he went on, fixing himself in that solemn, heroic mood which we know in his great mural decorations. More and more he sought the monumental motive, and as he did so allied his work with those majestic types of creative art the special note of which has something abstract and universal about it. In the paintings at the Armory he was more intimate, more personal, more artlessly human. They were curiously refreshing.

It was interesting to turn from them to our own imaginative painter, Albert P. Ryder, and to the French symbolist, Odilon Redon. Ryder is akin to Puvis in the elevation of his ideas and in his independence of convention, but if I may compare the two in terms of poetry—and both are strongly poetic in temperament—I may say that Puvis moves on the vast plane of the epic and Ryder is all for the jet of lyrical emotion and the world well lost. The American is wonderful in his color, using a thick, "fat" impasto and turning his picture into a kind of deep, clouded opal. He is romantic and he is spiritual. He paints his poetic or religious themes with great depth of feeling and at the same time with a sensu-

ous, mundane passion. He, too, like Puvis, "washes the eyes" and gives us a refined, exquisite pleasure. Redon is a singular figure. He shares the disposition of Puvis to look beyond the sphere of every-day familiar things; but Puvis was never dehumanized, and Redon, going fairly over the rim of the world for his themes, ends by suggesting not so much imagination as fancy. He is a kind of Gustave Moreau *manqué*, playing with an inspiration that is always promising something strange and beautiful, but not quite fulfilling itself. He is too symbolical by half, painting dreams that are altogether too insubstantial, dreams of which you are inclined to say not that they might mean anything but that they mean nothing at all. In his design, and, in fact, in all the minutiæ of his technique, he repeats this suggestion of an art not sufficiently sure of itself. His one outstanding virtue is an undeniable beauty of color, though this, too, crops out in the isolated passage rather than in any well-organized harmony. It is amusing to reflect on what Redon might do if he had some of the dogged force characteristic of Moreau, just as it is amusing to think of a Moreau exchanging his turgid surfaces and his morbid color for the piercing yet suave tones which from time to time come within Redon's scope.

There were divers other French painters whom it was good to encounter in this exhibition. Manet's "Portrait," an easy spontaneous study in dark tones,

proved one of the most fascinating bits of painting by him I had seen in a long time. There were good examples of Monet, Renoir and others of their circle. From the modern Dutch school we had a superb group of pictures by Matthew Maris, and in the American wing one could apprehend Whistler, not only in a characteristic portrait, but in a copy of the "Andromeda" of Ingres, full of interest as a relic of his youth. I may allude with warm sympathy also to the picturesque screens painted by Mr. Robert L. Chanler, novel schemes remarkably well executed. But of all the painters not hitherto touched upon in my survey of this collection the one upon whom it is perhaps most inviting to pause is the Englishman, Augustus John, simply because he is the newest of recent reputations having a serious basis. In London he is already a legend. The more esoteric reviewers of artistic affairs have there been wont to deal cavalierly enough with the average exhibition, until they have come upon this master of a lately formed school or group. Then they say that the show contains "an Augustus John," as who should say, "it contains one of the rarest of the old masters." A few of his drawings have strayed over to the United States and left a fine impression, but we had not before had the chance to see here what the man's art is really like.

It is distinguished art. You feel at once that Mr. John has an inborn gift and an individual habit of

using it. At the same time he is momentarily puzzling. It was not clear upon this occasion that he was getting all that might be got out of his natural resources, and presently one began to see why. It was because he is a realist by instinct, mistakingly trying to be something else. The picture called "The Way Down to the Sea," the largest, most important work he showed, aptly illustrates the point. In attitude and gesture, as well as in the broad lines of the composition, he unmistakably endeavors to invest his subject with some peculiar meaning, as though he would imaginatively enhance the significance of a quite ordinary act. In the faces, too, he would appear to be expressing some recondite mood. But in the upshot all this remains dark to the observer, who wonders why a group of peasants descending to the shore should proceed as upon some ritualistic business. The specious, mixed purpose of the design reacts upon the artist's technique. He is hard and stilted where one surmises a healthier, more direct conception of the whole subject would have encouraged him to paint better. Now if only this picture had been brought over, we fear that the fervors of Mr. John's London critics would have remained more mysterious than ever. But these were at least partially explained by his other works.

The drawings were very beautiful, and in them there was none of the stiffness which is so distressing in the painting just traversed. Mr. John's line is deli-

cate and free. In some of his heads he seems a Burne-Jones raised to a higher power; in others just a clever disciple of Leonardo, with a shrewd aptitude for that witchery of waving hair which so often beguiled the great Florentine. But in the main this English draughtsman has a style of his own and employs it with equal strength and charm. Decidedly his drawings prove that he is worth knowing, and appreciation grew on examination of his smaller works in color, studies of peasants, British and Continental, which were full of character and movement, full of subtle expression, and had into the bargain technical originality and power. There were other British painters represented — the graceful, amusing Conder, and Mr. Nathaniel Hone, whose two coast scenes were ingratiating in their robust yet fine grays. But in this section it was really a case of Augustus John first and the rest nowhere.

There were two departments in which the show was, on the whole, disappointing. The sculptors did not by any means make a strong contingent. Bourdelle was the most interesting of the foreigners. He has a large and even impressive sense of form, and in design is not without some faculty of invention. "Une Muse," a piece in high relief, contained some fine linear passages, it was decorative without triviality and left altogether an impression of vitalized simplicity. The pseudo-mediævalism of Wilhelm Lembruch was only ephemerally attractive. Among

the American sculptures there were some small pieces of value, notably the closely studied, sensitive and very personal animal subjects by Arthur Putnam, and Mr. J. E. Fraser's group of plaques. Mr. George Gray Barnard admirably asserted himself, too, and there were some clever things by Mr. Mahonri Young. Nevertheless, when one had scrutinized these few examples of plastic art one had comprehended the whole story. The sculpture as a whole left the spectator terribly cold. So likewise in respect to the black-and-white contributions. A few of the older draughtsmen saved the day, Ingres, Puvis and Rodin, with Toulouse-Lautrec and one or two other foreigners upholding their hands. Then there were, of course, the three or four drawings by Mr. Davies. But for the rest it can hardly be said that the innumerable drawings in ink, pencil, chalk and so on at all justified the space assigned to them. It would be beside the mark to lay stress upon the interest which attached to some of them because of their humor or of their fidelity to fragments of life observed at our doors. Here if anywhere we want style and freshness, the exceptional and brilliant stroke. Average sketch-book stuff has no place in a Salon of the Independents. But it did not seriously matter; there was so much in the show that was worth while. As I took leave of it I had but one thought, and that was of gratitude to the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. And I could not but smile over the hysterical denunci-

ations of what this body of artists had done, by alarmists in terror of Cubist and kindred influences. Is American art so wanting in American energy and intelligence that it is bound supinely to succumb to every deleterious movement that swings into view? Are the youths studying to be painters and sculptors so impressionable and, withal, so mindless and unstable, that they cannot be trusted to look upon things new and strange, even monstrous, without fear of collapse? The questions answer themselves. If the day ever comes when American art cannot subsist save in wrappings of cotton-wool, then it will behoove American art to put up the shutters.

VIII

Whistler

VIII

WHISTLER

I

WHO was Charles Gleyre? To ask and to answer that question in approaching the art of the late James McNeill Whistler is to draw much nearer, I think, to what is interesting in the genesis of that art, than if we seek to learn where and when the American painter and etcher was born, who his parents were, and all the other things that are supposed to count, and usually do count, in the development of a man's genius. In Whistler's case they do not count at all, and only the compilers of reference-books need trouble themselves about the vexed question as to whether he was born in 1834 or 1835, in Baltimore or St. Petersburg. He was, himself, always rather mysterious on these points. Perhaps he realized their unimportance, and, in his quizzical way, amused himself by evading the importunities of the intrusive biographer. No, the first salient fact by which we are confronted in his record is his entrance into Gleyre's studio in 1856, and so I return to my question.

Gleyre was a born classicist, a devoted conservator

of those principles upon which Ingres had placed his imprimatur, — the only principles, as they thought, which it was rational for French art to follow. Obviously they were, in a measure, wrong. Géricault proved it, Delacroix proved it, the works of all the Romantic and Naturalistic painters, both figure compositions and landscapes, remain an irrefragable proof that Ingres and Gleyre went too far in their academic fury against all things not academic. Less obviously, perhaps, but conclusively enough, they were, in a measure, right. At least they were in harmony with the French genius; at least they preached, in their gospel of "the rectitude of art," the truth that is at the bottom of the most characteristic things in the Salon to-day. But Gleyre, as Whistler's master, ceases for the moment to represent the continuity of French practice — he becomes a protagonist in the great artistic quarrel of the nineteenth century, that between tradition and temperament. Looking back at the pair in those early days, both men are perceived in a peculiarly interesting light. Gleyre stands for everything that has been formulated and accepted. Whistler, a mere youth, is already bent upon revolution, and the odd thing is that all his resources for the struggle were accumulated in his own nature; he drew nothing from the comrades who, like himself, sought an outlet from the stifling atmosphere of the Academy. That is why his period of pupilage is so important to remember. Even then he was a kind

of solitary, the influence of Gleyre only serving to accentuate his detachment from the reigning school. Never in later life did he more vividly demonstrate his title to a place apart in modern art than when he defied the very representative of officialdom to whom he had come to be taught.

I have said that he drew nothing from his more independent comrades. Degas was among them; he knew other Frenchmen since become celebrated, like that painter, for successful rebellion against routine, and he shared in their high erected talk. He did not share in any of their new movements to the extent of trying to do what they were trying to do, save for a brief emulation of Courbet. If he suffered rejection with Manet, for example, from the Salon, and thereupon sought recompense, with that artist, in the Salon des Refusés, it was by virtue of qualities entirely his own, and bearing the stamp of no school, impressionistic or what not, that he was scorned in the one place and welcomed in the other. I name Manet at this point because the contrast between his work and Whistler's in their time of trial is especially suggestive. The Frenchman's great sensation in the Salon des Refusés of 1863 was made with his now famous — then merely notorious — "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe." The American sent "La Femme Blanche," the first of his three early Symphonies in White. The position taken by both painters amounted in effect to this: that they cared nothing for subject as sub-

ject, but were solicitous solely for the charm to be got out of the sheer manipulation of paint. The difference between them, beginning in temperament, ended in something like a total separation of their ideals. To Manet the incongruity of his nude bather, grouped, beneath the trees near a stream, with two men in the coats and trousers of modern life, was of no earthly consequence. He was not painting an anecdote, he was painting an effect of light and air. But he really gives us more than this, he puts life into his figures and his scene, the life of the world we live in, something that moves and breathes and has a very human interest. Brilliant as a technician, Manet was most brilliant in putting his technique at the service of truth. What Velasquez and Hals taught him he used in a large, robust spirit. The scales had fallen from his eyes. The world was intensely real to him. His eyes devoured the substance of life, and his hands thrilled with a sense of power as he seized it and transferred it to canvas, its vitality heightened rather than diminished, and its appeal directed to the layman, caring for mankind, hardly less than to the dilettanti of "pure painting."

Whistler had felt the magic of Velasquez, and he was weary, as Manet was, of the cold, sapless fruits of the Academy. But it was no more in his nature to face the truth as Manet faced it than it was in his nature to emulate his contemporary's prodigious vigor. "La Femme Blanche" is not, like any one of Manet's

figures, a being whose humanity cannot be denied. One sees in this canvas simply the graceful wearer of a white dress which the artist has wanted to paint against a white curtain, and the same atmosphere as of technical experimentation hangs about "The Little White Girl" of 1864, and the third of the "symphonic" studies, painted in 1867. These canvases are all interiors. Not for him the luminosity, which, for Manet, Monet, and all the rest of the Impressionists, meant a new and indispensable factor in art. He sought cooler tones, in a still, sequestered world of his own; untroubled by the nervous tension of familiar life; unlit by anything so garish as the sun,—detached, in a word, from ordinary reality. Long afterward, alluding to his great portrait of his mother, which he called an "Arrangement in Grey and Black," he protested that while its personal associations were interesting to him, the public could have no legitimate concern with that side of the work. "It must stand or fall," he asserted, "on its merits as an arrangement." This was his attitude in the sixties, when he was feeling his way toward the expression of his ideal, and he never abandoned it. He was furious with Mr. Hamerton for complaining, in *The Saturday Review*, that there were more varieties of tint in the "Symphony in White, No. III," than could be squared with a literal interpretation of the title. "Bon Dieu!" he exclaims, "did this wise person expect white hair and chalked faces? And does he then, in his astounding

consequence, believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continued repetition of F, F, F? . . . Fool!"

The critic had certainly committed a *bêtise*, but this is not to say that Whistler deserved no criticism at all in those earlier days. On the contrary, it is very easy to exaggerate the value of the three paintings I have named. They are immensely interesting as illustrations of a kind of art unlike anything that had previously been done, and in the middle member of the trio particularly, the note struck is not simply so new, but so charming that it is, at first blush, a little difficult to understand why Paris was so slow in applauding the painter. The truth is that the absence in Whistler of that power which we have seen in Manet was destined, not altogether unjustly, to keep him for a long time out of his own. Preoccupied with the *nuance* of tone, trying to achieve in painting an effect which finds its parallel in, say, the music of Chopin, or the poetry of Verlaine, he neglected to so perfect himself in the handling of his brushes that one would see his effects and nothing else. As a matter of fact one sees a great deal else, a point which Whistler's thick and thin admirers are absurdly unwilling to concede. "The work of the master," he somewhere says, "reeks not of the sweat of the brow, — suggests no effort, — and is finished from its beginning." Consider the want of limpidity in the surfaces, the want of elasticity in the lines, of

the three Symphonies in White, and judge if there is no sign of effort in those works. Of masterful ease there is assuredly no suggestion. Some charm of tone is there, and the savor of genius is unmistakably present, but it is tone that needs to take on a purer transparence; it is genius that is not yet in full possession of itself. What Whistler himself thought of his first essays in paint is shown by an episode taken from a much later period in his career. He found, in an English collection, a picture he had painted, and painted so badly that he longed to destroy it. So anxious was he to do this that he offered to paint a full-length portrait of the owner, and another of his wife, in exchange for this ghost from his past!

If from the start he had been only a painter, the explanation of his deficiencies could the more speedily be found, but it is one of the interesting things about Whistler that, just as he makes his début in painting, and starts the critic on an analytic pursuit, the latter is brought athwart the etchings, and, for the moment, must see his subject in a very different light. Again the name of Gleyre presents itself. Looking simply to the three Symphonies in White one would say that he, to whom draughtsmanship was as the soul of art, had not taught his pupil to draw. Not down to the end of his career was Whistler to draw with the brush as most other masters have drawn, — masters as unlike one another as Velasquez, Titian, Raphael, Mantegna and Ingres. But with the etching

needle in his hand he drew as only Rembrandt had drawn before him, with a precision, a delicacy, a power, which, perhaps, after all, not Ingres and Gleyre together could have taught him. These qualities appeared in his first etchings, the French Set of 1858; and when the Thames Set was finished a year or so later, he had developed his art to a remarkable point of self-possession and force. Altogether he produced nearly four hundred plates, and, while they vary in excellence, there is not one in the collection which is without some touch disclosing the great artist.

For convenience these etchings may be roughly divided into four groups. The first two have just been named. In them, and in the etchings of the sixties, brilliance both of line and tone is the predominating characteristic. Then, around the early seventies, Whistler modified his manner, sketched the figure with a freer point, and often substituted for the rich tones, the velvety blacks and deep browns of his earlier plates, a grayer and more impalpable veil of color, approximating more to the key of certain of his paintings. Several years passed, and in Venice he entered upon a new phase, exchanging the full firm line of his first plates for a looser, more stenographic form of expression. Thereafter, in plates done in France, Belgium and Holland, and in some delightful notes of a British naval review, he adhered to much the same method. The point of view from which he made all his etchings is well exhibited in one of

his letters to a friend who happened to be staying in Stuttgart at the time, and had written him of the picturesqueness of that place. It all sounded delightful to him. He had never visited Stuttgart but imagined its fascinations, and wondered if it wasn't full of "quaint little daintinesses" for him to carry off. That was ever his mood, one of immediate sympathy for dainty picturesqueness, and what makes the incident I have cited doubly characteristic is its indication of his tendency to look for that quality in what I may call the immobile aspects of a city. If he seeks movement at all, it is in the lines of shipping on the Thames, or it is in the men and women who enliven a street or square, — and over these idlers or passers-by he pauses only long enough deftly to summarize them, and to furnish his composition with some sign of life.

Why did he not make more of the human figure in his etchings? He was not altogether without resource in this direction. In fact, some of his portraits, like the "Drouet," for example, or several others of men, women, and children, show a fine sense of form. I think the reason why we find among his plates none of the dramatic figure subjects that we find in the etched work of Rembrandt, whom he equals otherwise, is that he was not interested in human nature for its own sake; indeed, I sometimes wonder if he was interested in it at all, if the passion and poetry of life were not, to him, a sealed book. In his Ten

O'Clock lecture Whistler speaks of Art being selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; and in illustration of her disposition to seek the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, he cites "her high priest" Rembrandt, who, he goes on, "saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' Quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks." The point is well taken, yet we can imagine Rembrandt protesting to Whistler, — if they are now somewhere talking together of their earthly experiences, — protesting that his position in the matter had been understated; that he saw a good deal more than picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' Quarter at Amsterdam and wherever else he sought his models; that he saw, and felt, the emotions by which the faces of those models were marked, by which their frames had been made significant of the soul's travail. We cannot imagine Whistler illustrating the Scriptures as Rembrandt illustrated them. To have done so he would have had to suffer a transformation of his whole nature, to have learned that there is more in mankind than the materials for an "arrangement" in line or color. Furthermore, even if he had had an impulse toward Rembrandt's way of looking at things, it is probable that he would have failed through his lack of anatomical knowledge. His portraits, I repeat, are often masterly, but to put forth elaborate compositions he needed an even greater command over

the secrets of the figure than they reveal. I note the fact with little or no regret, however, for in his chosen field Whistler made such beautiful etchings that it would be foolish to wish that he had done something else.

Architecture, seemingly so fixed a phenomenon, nevertheless presents itself to different eyes with the most drastic differences. To Méryon it is again and again a symbol of mystery and of eerie, even tragic beauty. To a man of the light temperament of Lalanne it is an affair of grace and elegance. To Whistler it meant a picturesqueness from which now and then a certain romantic glamour might seem inseparable, but which he sought to express quite unemotionally. We know what he could see in the Thames: "The evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens and fairyland is before us." But it was as the colorist, as the painter, that he wrote these words. As an etcher it was not fairyland that he saw, whether on the Thames or in Venice, it was simply a world of picturesque buildings and boats, dim arches that held subtle beauties of light and shade, delicate traceries of stone or metal that made in his plates an effective "pattern." There is poetry in it, the sensuous poetry that appeals solely to the eye. It has none of the deeper implica-

tions of the art produced by a man looking, involuntarily, beneath the surface. But let us have done with qualifications. In his own sphere of etching Whistler is incomparable.

Edmond de Goncourt, in that amazing journal which preserves so much of the gossip he and his brother loved, quotes Legros as saying to him, in 1882, "Whistler, oui, c'est pas mal . . . c'est de la jolie eau-forte d'amateur!" How, I wonder, could an artist as accomplished as Legros was himself utter a remark like this! If there is one thing more than another which is demonstrated by Whistler's etchings it is that in them he enjoys absolute control of his needle; that here he is a master from whom no secrets of technique are hid. It is not simply that he is letter-perfect, so to say, that he abides by every canon of the art. It is that from beginning to end his style seems to have been so sinewy, so strong, so wonderfully buoyant. At the outset his line is forcible and clear. It is often deeply bitten, and while he knows well what to omit, he gives one an impression — notably in the Thames set — of objects patiently observed and very carefully noted. In his later Venetian studies he skims the copper with a lighter hand, leaves out a great deal more detail, secures the tenderest atmospheric effects, and, in brief, refines his art without losing any strength. All through the long succession of plates he enchants us with his faculty for extorting from his material the loveliest webs

of line, the loveliest passages of tone. He is superb in composition, whether he be etching the old tenements that line the Thames, with rocking masts and the delicate lines of rigging to break the monotony of their homely façades, or is commemorating some infinitely more romantic theme in France or Venice. He is always sufficiently pictorial, no matter what his subject may be, and always conscious of the special quality of the etcher's art, knowing how to adjust his material to it, seeking the lines that will best form an interesting arabesque. His style is unique. No etcher in the past, not Rembrandt or Claude; no one in his own time, not Méryon or Haden, ever saw his subject quite as he saw it, or handled it quite as he handled it. All those masters have qualities which he lacked. We have observed how Rembrandt outsoars him in intellectual and spiritual grasp. Whistler could never interpret landscape as Haden has interpreted it. But in strength and beauty of line, in brilliance of style, Whistler's etchings form a body of work with which the masterpieces of Rembrandt and Haden are alone worthy to be grouped. I have seen, written by him on a proof of one of Rembrandt's noblest portraits, these words: "Without flaw. Beautiful as a Greek marble or a canvas by Tintoret. A masterpiece in all its elements, beyond which there is nothing." The familiar butterfly affixed to this tribute carried a discomfiting suggestion with it. Could any of the works of art bearing that dainty

emblem deserve such heroic praise? Perhaps not. Whistler never rose, like Rembrandt, to the heroic plane. Nevertheless, so far as they go, his etchings are "without flaw."

In all the years from which they date he was steadily painting portraits and pictures. Finding no encouragement in Paris he soon went to live in London, where he made his home for many years. He could hardly expect to find in Chelsea a more sympathetic environment than he had found in Paris, but too much has been made of what his surroundings may have signified to him in either place. For a painter of his predilections the only things needful were a studio and an occasional patron. He did not paint French life when he was in France. He never thought of painting English life when he came to England, but went on along the lines laid down in those Symphonies in White to which I have already referred. Some commentators have been astonished at his intimacy with Rossetti. It was entirely natural. The fact that they did not paint in the same fashion is beside the question. Where they were absolutely united was in preferring, as artists, a kind of curtained existence, in which they could ignore the claims of the schools and the world in general, and make pictures as far removed from the joys and troubles of mere humanity as so many pieces of Oriental porcelain. Rossetti, embracing with enthusiasm the pre-Raphaelite ideal of fidelity to nature, never took the

trouble to learn how to paint, so that he might put the truth on canvas with some degree of accuracy. He cared not for the scenes outside his house and garden, but for the scenes in the poets. He dreamed iridescent dreams, and, reflecting them in his work after his own self-willed esoteric fashion, was content. He and Whistler must have been vastly pleased with themselves as they stood aloof from everything that was making the history of their time, and, with scornful chuckles, cultivated each his hidden plot of ground. Whistler was the surer of remaining comparatively undisturbed in his seclusion because of his rare gift for quarrelling. He was a difficult man to get on with, and the wrecks of friendships were scattered through his career in appalling profusion. It is said that there still survives somewhere a portrait he painted of the late Mr. Naylor Leyland, after he had decorated the famous Peacock Room in that gentleman's London house, and had parted from him in a rage. In this portrait the mild-mannered collector is given horns and hoofs, and is transformed into a ramping devil. The tale does no injustice to Whistler, who loved the fray, and, when offended, was capable of taking a stinging revenge. He made himself feared, in short, and, even in the midst of society, that must have helped to create a spiritual loneliness for him. If he suffered any loss thereby he never knew it. Supremely self-centred, he threw himself into his work and exploited his own

ideas with an absorption and a conviction of right which we cannot but admire.

The results of his labors, portraits, marines, and pictures like the "Fireworks at Cremorne," which proved such a memorable stumbling-block to Mr. Ruskin, were, in general, slow in forthcoming. Was it his early distaste for rudimentary instruction that left him handicapped, as it were, and caused him to proceed upon a canvas, as a rule, with the greatest deliberation? Or was it that the subtlety of tone he was always seeking could not be attained at a stroke? There are stories of the miraculous facility with which he could paint a picture, of the consummate skill with which he could brush in a detail, without a moment's hesitation, leaving it perfect. It will be remembered that at the Ruskin trial he testified that he had painted the "Fireworks at Cremorne" in "about a day." The point, he thought, was immaterial, for in asking two hundred guineas for the picture he argued that he was asking to be paid, not for the work of a day, but for "the knowledge of a lifetime." The question, however, of whether he was a rapid or a slow painter, a sure or a hesitating one, is interesting, for it really bears upon the essential character of his art.

It is not, in respect to technique, with the grand masters that he is to be grouped. One of the traits of those masters is a certain momentum, as of a creative force passing through the world, boldly, majestically,

and leaving landmarks in its wake. It is not Rubens alone who suggests this idea of propulsive energy and great weight, or Michael Angelo, or Hals. The serene Velasquez also suggests it. We have all heard a great deal about Whistler's resemblance to the Spaniard, and it is there, but not where the central springs of action, the very divine spark of genius and its free fruitful movements, are concerned. The greatest art, no matter how complex in design it may be, is unmistakably spontaneous. Whistler's art was not of that highest order; it is more apt to suggest the slow and painstaking building up of an effect. Where you find the resemblance between him and Velasquez is in the gradations that he gets out of blacks and grays and whites; in the simplicity with which he poses a figure against a neutral background; in the texture of his color throughout. We may go further and say that he had a sense of values akin to that of Velasquez himself. But if we keep in mind what Whistler was driving at, and what he actually accomplished, we must admit that a meaning he never intended can easily be read into his much-quoted retort, "Why drag in Velasquez?" For one thing, Velasquez, as Whistler himself pointed out, "made his people live within their frames, and *stand upon their legs*." That was not precisely Whistler's own aim, except in a few rare instances. His figures are not so much human beings, living within their frames and standing upon their legs, as they are lovely apparitions, alluring vi-

sions of charming women gliding through some place of dim lights and hovering shadows. The portrait of Lady Meux, known as the "Harmony in Pink and Gray," may or may not be a good portrait. There is no mistaking its beauty as a piece of color, a harmony really musical in its purity and sweetness. Again, in lower keys, the portrait of Miss Rosa Corder, "Arrangement in Black and Brown," and the study in the same colors known as "The Fur Jacket," a similar impression of something faint, elusive, and most delicately sensuous is conveyed. There are other portraits which recur to me, particularly "La Dame au Brodequin Jaune," and the dainty portrait of Miss Alexander, "Harmony in Gray and Green," a picture of childhood, which has no parallel in modern art save Mr. Sargent's "Little Miss Beatrice Goelet." But I pass over all these studies of blooming femininity; I pass over such delightfully decorative schemes as "The Balcony," "The Music Room," "The Gold Screen," and "The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks," to reach the two most renowned canvases that Whistler painted — his portrait of his mother, which now hangs in the Luxembourg, and the portrait of Carlyle in old age, which, in recent years, has been acquired by the Corporation of Glasgow.

The bulk of his work is charming. The "Portrait of the Artist's Mother" and the "Thomas Carlyle" are much more than that. To realize the difference is to see the unwisdom of being stampeded by

a man's fame into accepting everything he does as necessarily a triumph of genius. It is well to acclaim the genius of Whistler. We only darken counsel when we grow hysterical over it. For my own part I believe that his numerous portraits of women, while sure to survive as paintings of great individuality, and of a very delicate beauty, would not carry Whistler's name unquestioned down to posterity if he had not also painted his portrait of his mother, and the "Carlyle." Those rank him with the old masters. The others, if they formed his sole legacy to the galleries of the world, would keep him among the men just below the best. The reason is obvious the moment one puts prejudice aside and looks at things as they are. The mark of the great picture in every epoch has been a mark of organic balance. The painter has realized his conception with absolute felicity. Nothing could be added. Nothing could be taken away. Everything in the picture — composition, drawing, modelling, color, the personality of the sitter, when the picture is a portrait—contributes to one end, and that is a unit of beauty. Can it be said of any of Whistler's portraits of young women that they fulfil these conditions as the portrait of his mother fulfils them? He may have denied a thousand times our right to interest ourselves in his mother's personality. Long after her name and his, perhaps, have vanished from the frame, men will look on this canvas and prize it as the portrait of an individual.

It will be the same with the "Carlyle"; characterization is of immense importance in both works. But it is the rounded perfection of them that I would chiefly emphasize, the noble simplicity with which, in each case, Whistler has given form to his idea.

The curtain and framed picture which figure in the background of the portrait of his mother, the two pictures and the butterfly introduced for the same decorative purpose in the "Carlyle," give us no sense of artificiality, of painfully sought effect, that we feel in looking at so many of what I may designate as his minor achievements. In his two unqualifiedly great paintings he rises to a seriousness which he was only too seldom disposed to cultivate. In them he shows the "noble dignity" which he attributed to Rembrandt. Survey his work as a figure-painter from beginning to end and it seems as if all his life he were trying for something wholly fine, came near it again and again, but only twice, when he painted the portraits I have chosen, saw his heart's desire satisfied. I say "his heart's desire" because at bottom he is just as faithful to himself in his pair of masterpieces as in his other paintings. He attempted nothing new. He did violence to none of his cherished theories. The two portraits are as much "arrangements" as anything he ever painted, — only they are more completely successful as such. He is the butterfly here as elsewhere. This, indeed, ought never to be forgotten, for even when he holds his own among the

old masters, it is through his possession of a quality quite different from that to which they, in the main, owe their pre-eminence. He is not strong as they are strong, he has not their conquering might. Some one has defined taste as the feminine of genius, and Whistler is the incarnation of taste. Once, talking with a companion about the energy and skill shown by certain painters conspicuous in modern art, he remarked, with a gentle deprecating humor that robbed his words of all complacence, that while he admired the men in question, he could not but feel that he had put something into his own work which theirs lacked. He called it distinction, and the epithet is a happy one. Whistler's figure-pieces may not carry us off our feet, but with a quietude and a persuasiveness that, in these days especially, are above rubies, they exert the spell of high distinction. There have been more masculine painters; but none has surpassed him in expressing on canvas the quintessence of refinement.

The dangers to which an exemplar of this kind of art is exposed I have emphasized in glancing at Whistler's minor portraits, those curiously "precious" productions that so narrowly escape unreality, because in portraiture an excessively decorative and too exquisite method is the more seriously to be questioned. In his Nocturnes, on the other hand, and in his other daring variations on themes provided by scenes out-of-doors, Whistler has far less to fear. In them he is

untroubled by any question of form, he is not handicapped by the necessity of giving even an approximately clear statement of facts. Returning again to his testimony in the suit he brought against Ruskin, we find him admitting, as to the famous Fireworks picture, that "if it were called a view of Cremorne, it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of the beholders." On the same occasion, when his "Nocturne in Blue and Silver" was produced in court, he said, "It represents Battersea Bridge by moonlight," but when Baron Huddleston asked him if he would describe the picture as a correct representation of the subject, he replied, "I did not intend it to be a 'correct' portrait of the bridge. It is only a moonlight scene, and the pier in the centre of the picture may not be like the piers at Battersea Bridge as you know them in broad daylight. As to what the picture represents that depends upon who looks at it. To some persons it may represent all that is intended; to others it may represent nothing. . . . My whole scheme was only to bring about a certain harmony of color." With such an ambition it is clearly unnecessary for a painter to give any such place to the truths of nature as was given to them by, for example, the members of the Barbizon school. Nature, in fact, merely provides him with an excuse for the exercise of his virtuosity.

Whistler is not the only modern painter representing this principle. Monticelli, in his studies of syl-

van glades obscurely peopled with shapes that might be those of fair women or fairer wraiths, invented chromatic splendors which, at their best, are as distinguished in their way as Whistler's elegiac harmonies. Other men of lesser ability have worked in the same vein. The special value of Whistler's Nocturnes resides in the ravishing beauty of their color, the poetry of their sentiment, and the piquancy of their style. He could, when he chose, paint a sparkling little water-color of the sea, not only beautiful but true; he could paint a picture like his "Thames in Ice," as realistic as a work of Courbet's. But he was happiest in those paintings, like the "Crepuscule in Flesh Color and Green," "Valparaiso"; or the "Nocturne, Gray and Gold, — Chelsea, Snow," in which our appreciation of the scene is altogether subsidiary to our enjoyment of the color in which he has enveloped it. The two pyrotechnical Nocturnes, "The Fire Wheel" and "The Falling Rocket," though not perhaps his finest works in this field, are certainly the most instructive, for in them he carried his theories to their ultimate conclusion, eschewing all tangible facts, and aiming at his effect almost as though he had no pictorial intention at all, but were covering a panel with color as an Oriental craftsman powders a box with gold. Painting these Nocturnes and Symphonies and Harmonies, he gave to art a new sensation, one in which the more esoteric charm of his genius is extraordinarily beguiling.

Incidentally he showed to the world his rare versatility. But still he was not satisfied, and having given his measure in painting and etching, he insisted upon being recognized as a writer. He was a witty man, and he wrote like one. Two books stand to his credit. "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," which he published in 1890, contains his account of the Ruskin trial, his Ten O'Clock lecture, and a quantity of squibs and letters indited in scorn of his critics and other persons who had annoyed him. In "The Baronet and the Butterfly: a Valentine with a Verdict," which dates from 1899, he set forth at considerable length the details of the litigation in which he was involved with Sir William Eden over a portrait he had painted of the baronet's wife. This second book has no serious claim upon the reader. It records an episode in which the artist shone with a good deal less than his accustomed brilliance, and it shows him, to tell the truth, in no very engaging mood. "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," however, is sure to be preserved, for it contains many of Whistler's ideas on art, and is, to boot, abundantly amusing. The ideas signify, first and last, that the artist is an isolated phenomenon, seeking beauty for its own sake, and quite beyond the understanding of the Philistine, who should merely bow before his work and be thankful for the privilege. The critic, by the way, is always a Philistine. "There never was an artistic period. There never was an Art-loving nation." In all ages

the artist has been an unexplainable gift of God to mankind, — though from the way in which Whistler leaves mankind out of the question it might perhaps be more accurate to interpret him as arguing that the artist simply "happens," and is his own sole reason for existing. Art, he says, "is a goddess of dainty thought, — reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, purposing in no way to better others." Her leading principle in the pursuit of beauty is one of selection. "Nature contains the elements, in color and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music. . . . To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano." In aphorisms like these Whistler threw light on his own work, and restated elements in the broad philosophy of art which any one might learn from intelligent study of the masters, but which it was well to have expressed as deftly and pungently as he expressed them. The Bible of Art, he once called his book, in half-mocking, half-proud humor. It is not that, but it is unquestionably a stimulating volume.

The epigrams it contains, the steel points on which he impaled his enemies, are glittering and sometimes venomous, but though Whistler had a malice all his own, his humor is so delightful that even his victims must have enjoyed many of his thrusts. He had a rare gift for repartee. When he talked of the "shock of surprise that was Balaam's when the first great

critic proffered his opinion," and a commentator in "Vanity Fair," turning to the Scriptures, gleefully pointed out that "*the Ass was right*, although, nay, because he was an Ass," it took him but a moment to send this retort: "I find, on searching again, that historically you are right. The fact, doubtless, explains the conviction of the race in their mission, but I fancy you will admit that this is the *only Ass on record* who ever *did* 'see the Angel of the Lord!' and that we are past the age of Miracles." In the catalogue for the exhibition of etchings which he held in London in 1883, he created much mirth by placing under the titles quotations from his critics, and very comical was the result. One of the gentlemen cited, Mr. Frederick Wedmore, complained that he had been misrepresented, that he had been quoted as using the word "understand" when he had really written "understate." Whistler promptly apologized. "My carelessness is culpable," he said, "and the misprint without excuse; for naturally I have all along known, and the typographer should have been duly warned, that with Mr. Wedmore, as with his brethren, it is always a matter of understating, and not at all one of understanding." How many more instances of his readiness and ruthlessness might be given! The list is endless, for not only is "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies" packed with sharp sayings, but all his life Whistler barbed his words, and hundreds of his witticisms have been widely circulated, either in print or

in the talk of those who have known him. Naturally his diabolical instinct for the vitriolic phrase has reacted upon the public estimate of his character as a man, and in many quarters the accepted view is that which Degas is said to have once expressed to his face, that one would hardly suspect from his talk and demeanor that he was a great artist.

II

In one of those brief and biting disquisitions upon which Whistler lavished as much pains as he gave to the painting of a picture, and in which he found as much pleasure as he gave to his readers, he paid his satirical compliments to the critics who could not understand why he called his works "symphonies," "arrangements," "harmonies" and "nocturnes." "I know," he went on, "that many good people think my nomenclature funny and myself 'eccentric.' Yes, 'eccentric' is the adjective they find for me." That adjective was found for him long before he wrote the words just quoted, which were first published in 1878. He was considered eccentric when he was a young man in the studio of Gleyre, and he was considered so down to the day of his death. Yet the Whistler of fact was not altogether like the Whistler of legend. If he was eccentric and a poseur, if he was fond of talking for effect, and willing, on occasion, to sacrifice a friend merely for the pleasure of making an

epigram, there was, at all events, a fine consistency about his character. He never pretended to be anything save what he was; he exposed his foibles to the world with the most charming candor, and the war he waged against the Philistines in his youth he waged so long as he lived. He was a man who conveyed at the outset an unsatisfactory impression, and ended by endearing himself to you as one of the most delightful of human beings — when he did not happen to end by transforming a friend into an enemy.

The first time I saw him, in his studio in the Rue de Bac, he entered the room at a mincing gait, carrying a straw hat in one hand and a bird-cage in the other. As he moved about, talking at the top of his shrill voice, he seemed anything but an embodiment of artistic greatness. Half an hour later, when he had got rid of the bird-cage and the hat, and had subsided into a chair, one's first impression wore off, and in every succeeding encounter with him it receded further and further into obscurity. He has been accused of thinking, and talking, eternally of himself, in season and out of season. Scores of anecdotes commemorate his vanity. In that unfortunate passage which Du Maurier introduced into "Trilby," attacking his old comrade under the name of Joe Sibley, he said of Whistler that "he was a monotheist, and had but one god," and continued: "For forty years the cosmopolite Joe has been singing his one god's praises in every tongue he knows and every

country — and also his contempt for all rivals to this godhead — whether quite sincerely or not, who can say? Men's motives are so mixed!" But even Du Maurier has to confess, in this selfsame passage (which, by the way, it will be recalled that he had to withdraw), that Whistler did this "so eloquently, so wittily, so prettily, that he almost persuades you to be a fellow worshipper." The truth is that Whistler had a way with him that made it impossible for any one who knew him well to resent his vanity.

Writing to an old friend from Ajaccio, where he had gone early in the winter of 1901 to mend his health, he begged his correspondent not to be surprised at his address, adding, "It's all right — 'Napoleon and I,' you know." During the occupation of Paris by the allied troops, the Duke of Wellington lived in the palace of Napoleon, and in a note to Admiral Malcolm, at St. Helena, he said: "You may tell 'Bony' that I find his apartments at the Elysée Bourbon very convenient, and that I hope he likes mine at Mr. Balcom's. It is a droll sequel enough to the affairs of Europe that *we* should change places of residence." Could any one with a sense of humor accuse Wellington of being colossally conceited because he liked his little joke? Whistler always liked his little joke. In another letter to the same friend, alluding to some document relating to his own work, he remarks that he should of course be much interested in all that concerned himself. Speaking of a

public official with whom he had had some legal transactions, he explained that he quite understood how the person in question had been torn between care of Whistler and care of the state. One could not serve the republic — and Whistler.

In 1897 some one in Italy sent a circular addressed to him at "The Academy, England." The post-office authorities added "Burlington House," but it was declined there, and ultimately the circular reached him indorsed "Not known at the R. A." He promptly sent it to *The Daily Mail*, saying, "In these days of doubtful frequentation, it is my rare good fortune to be able to send you an unsolicited, official and final certificate of character." As a lifelong friend of his once said to me: "Whistler must have some excitement in his daily life, and if he cannot meet with it in the natural course of events he must create it for himself." The observation is just, but, I repeat, one only had to know Whistler in order to put this foible of his in its proper perspective. Things that would have sounded grotesque on the lips of another man seemed somehow inoffensive enough when they came from him. Thus in conversation he resented contradiction, and was disposed to meet it with a vehemence that was alarming, but I have known him to be inimitably amiable afterward, in atonement for his hasty speech. He was a captivating host at dinner, consummate in politeness, and entertaining beyond measure.

There was a good deal about Whistler's personality to recall the insolent exquisites of the eighteenth century on both sides of the Channel. He had their capacity for almost brutal cruelty in speech, and he had their deftness and grace of demeanor. While he could inflict a deep wound with a sort of debonair indifference to the sufferings of his victim, no one knew better than he how to observe the punctilio of an occasion — and he did not always require pomp and circumstance for the exercise of his suavity. He called once at an obscure lodging-house in the Latin Quarter to return the visit of two friends. One of them, a burly Englishman, had come in only ten minutes before from a long tramp in the rain, and sat in his shirt-sleeves with his feet in a tub of hot water when there was a tap at his door. Thinking it was his comrade from across the landing, he called to him to enter. The door opened and in walked Whistler, to the consternation of his host. Did the great painter smile, or show embarrassment or amusement in any way? He took in the situation at a glance, helped himself to a chair, and in five minutes, by his charm of manner and his wit, he had driven all sense of annoyance and humiliation from the mind of the man he had so inopportunely surprised.

It was amusing to hear Whistler declaiming against the British in the South African War. For our own conflict with the Spaniards he had nothing but ad-

miration. I remember his speaking with enthusiasm of the dignity of this country in the entire affair, and especially of the high breeding shown by our officers in their attitude toward the enemy. He was eloquent over our treatment of Admiral Cervera. The occasion seemed appropriate and I asked him why he did not come over to visit us, telling him what a welcome he would be sure to receive. Whistler was always a man of singularly upright carriage, but he seemed to stand more erect than ever as he stopped in the middle of the pavement, and, tapping it with his stick, looked me straight in the face and earnestly declared, "I shall come to America when the duty on works of art is abolished!" His tight-fitting coat was buttoned around him as he spoke, the tall silk hat, with its straight brim, which he always wore, added to the piquant grimness of his appearance, and as he gave me his terse ultimatum, he seemed a fighter, every inch of him, hurling defiance at the lawgivers of his native land.

Du Maurier, anxious to prove that Whistler was an egoist, speaks of the "one god" he worshipped, and adds, "No stodgy old master, this divinity, but a modern of the moderns." The truth is that even in his youth he frequented the old masters with a grave appreciation not to be completely hidden by his merriment and his ardor for all the fantastic adventures of an art student in Paris. "What is not worthy of the Louvre is not art," he has been quoted

as saying. We have seen his judgment on a plate of Rembrandt's. He thought that "The Milky Way" of Tintoretto, in the National Gallery, was the greatest picture in the world. He was not a devotee of Turner, but he yielded to no man in appreciation of certain of the works of that painter. Some of his sayings, though with a grain of truth in them, have unmistakably the speciousness of things uttered for effect. One evening in London he stormed picturesquely for an hour on what he regarded as the limitations of Ingres, whom he persisted in calling a bourgeois Greek. On another occasion, writing a postal card which he was making as decorative as a picture with his dainty penmanship, he paused to tell me what he thought of Aubrey Beardsley. "We-e-ll," he drawled, "he strikes me as one of those men standing about in the market-place because no man hath hired them." He would see nothing, even in the young draughtsman's diabolical cleverness, to admire. Later, by the way, he is reported to have reconsidered his views about Beardsley; but he was not lavish of praise where his contemporaries were concerned. Though he could say pleasant things about them in a rather vague way, calling some young painter "a good fellow" and so on, words of explicit admiration he did not promiscuously bestow. The truth is, there was an immense amount of stuff which he saw in the exhibitions which he frankly detested. Yet conversation with him did not leave the impression that he

was a man grudging of praise. It was rather that a picture had to be exceptionally good to excite his emotions. One point is significant. It was not the flashy and popular painter that he invited to share in the gatherings for which his Parisian studio was noted, it was the painter like Puvis de Chavannes, the man who had greatness in him.

His fame as an artist — if not his exact rank — is already fixed, though he liked to keep up the fiction that the world was unworthy of him, and there are quaint admirers of his who persist in talking, and writing, as if, after all his efforts, he had made no impression upon his time. He was never popular as Leighton or Bouguereau was popular. It was not until late in his career that he received high prices for his pictures. But Whistler is the last artist in the world for us to consider with reference to what ordinarily constitutes popularity. He did not paint for the many; he painted, if ever a man did, for the few; and he never lacked the appreciation which must have been dearer to a man of his stripe than any material benefit. As far back as 1872, when he sent his portrait of his mother to the Royal Academy, and it was threatened with rejection, Sir William Boxall declared that he would withdraw from the council if it were not accepted. He was destined always to have both material and artistic success. Why should we bewail his fate, talking of him as a man who had suffered much? If he had times of privation, so have

other great men had them. Others have known what it has meant to have the bailiff at the door.

On the whole, Whistler's career was a singularly rich and happy one. He did the work he wanted to do, and did it in his own way. He had hosts of friends, — when he lost them it was usually through his own fault; and he did not have long to wait for the approval of his fellow-painters. For a generation his influence has been acknowledged in the studios, and probably no artist of his time has received more frequently the sincerest form of flattery. His etchings have long been prized by connoisseurs and assiduously collected; the moment it was announced that he had taken up lithography, his sketches in this medium were at once eagerly sought. His paintings found owners reasonably soon enough, as the experience of almost any artist of genius goes, and to-day many of the best of them are where all the world may see them. His two finest portraits hang, as I have noted, in the Luxembourg and in the Public Gallery at Glasgow respectively. The "Duret" and the full-length of "Irving as Philip" are in the Metropolitan Museum in New York; the "Sarasate" is at Pittsburg; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts has his "Blacksmith" and one or two other things, and elsewhere in America numbers of his pictures may be found in public and private galleries. The critics he contemned may in some cases, at the outset, have undervalued him. But there has never been anything

visible in the public prints even remotely resembling the general ignorance of his art, and the foolish distaste for it, which he liked to attribute to the critics, pretending that they were arrayed in a conspiracy of dulness and fatuity against him. He was eulogized everywhere when he died. He had been eulogized for years before the end came.

He passed from the scene full of years and honors, secure of the applause of his peers and of that of a much larger section of the multitude than, with his strange temperament, it would have suited him to admit. He leaves no school, but that is natural enough. His art is inimitable. He could help greatly to purify the taste of his time, he could give to painters, and to laymen too, some valuable hints on color, and he made the "arrangement" in portraiture popular. But his influence, though wide, as I have said, has been more a corrective than a constructive force. Imitation of him has led to nothing more than — imitation. His is not the kind of art that, imposing itself upon men, starts an evolutionary movement. He meant it to exist in and for itself alone, and so it does, like some rare orchid that has no prototype and can have no successor.

IX

Sargent

IX

SARGENT

SARGENT'S princely rank in modern painting was conferred upon him at his birth. In his career, which already has entered into the history of art as something singular and important, every condition has been favorable. All things, from the start, conspired to make him a painter, and even in his student days he possessed the instinctive authority over his brushes which, in an age of technicians, is nevertheless rare. The point means more than is immediately obvious. Scores of modern painters paint so well that in any exhibition, until the self-confessed amateurs are reached, a certain workmanlike standard is taken as a matter of course. But look beneath the surface in any collection of contemporary pictures, and a surprising number of celebrated names are found to spell one of two things — mechanism or effort. Sargent's name does not spell either. Bred in the studio of a Parisian of the Parisians, he has never adopted any of the hollow tricks of the Salonnier, who reduces execution to a science, and calls it art; and, paradoxically while "the way in which he does it" is a mat-

ter of perpetual interest to his critics, he offers in his work the proof of Mr. Whistler's maxim, that "a picture is finished when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared."

I am aware of the danger in approaching Sargent in this cheerful mood. For some years he tyrannized over the Royal Academy in a way well calculated to make a great many excellent mediocrities hate the sight of his productions. It has been a case of Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere. One show in particular at Burlington House — it was, I think, in 1900 — I vividly remember. The vast wall space was, as usual, more than well covered. I scrutinized every inch of it with care, and an open mind. Literally, every canvas that had anything profitable to say for itself was a Sargent. His peers have accepted the situation with amiability. But a mild reaction has recently set in, and as Sargent is not able, any more than any other man, to strike twelve every time he paints a picture, he has been terribly taken to task for his failures; divers critics have been finding out that he hasn't really any genius at all, but is simply one more "talent" — of a rather unusual order, to be sure, but still only a talent. For my own part, the shock of one of his failures has always been especially distressing; it has come with a weight in proportion to its source. But why in the world it should set any one to a solemn shaking of the head over the painter of the "Carmencita," or the "Miss Beatrice

Goelet," or the "Asher Wertheimer," it is difficult to perceive. Most of the jeremiads intoned over him, apropos of an unsuccessful portrait, actually amount to this: that he does not paint like somebody else, like Titian, or Rembrandt, or Gainsborough, or Degas. Better a hundred failures than the one most humiliating of all — the failure to paint like himself.

He has been his own inspiration from the outset, a fact doubled in interest when his early environment is considered. He was born in Florence (in 1856), and I suppose the future historian will accordingly look for traces of Italian art in his development. They lurk, presumably, in the copies of Venetian portraits which he is said to have made, and, doubtless, in boyish sketch-books thus far hidden from the public. Certainly, too, the scenes of his youth must be counted among those favorable conditions to which allusion has been made above. No one with the artistic temperament could live, at the most impressionable of all ages, among the masterpieces of the Southern schools, and not experience a fertilization of his nature, a purification of his taste. But whatsoever he may have derived, in the way of stimulus or suggestion, from the linear charm of the Tuscan Primitives, the plastic power of the North Italians, or the sensuous beauty of the Venetians, he has kept to himself. When the time for his apprenticeship arrived he gravitated to Paris as naturally and, from all we know to the contrary, as little encumbered with

prejudice, as any American leaving New York or Boston for the artistic workshop of the world. He found there the one teacher, as it seems to me, best fitted to his own aptitudes — Carolus-Duran. Not the Carolus-Duran of that specious virtuosity which of late years has glittered in the Salon with the gaudy pride of fashionable vulgarity itself, but the Carolus-Duran of the "Croizette," the "Sabine," and other memorable canvases of the seventies and thereabouts. These were among the first fruits of a reorganized state of affairs, and, it may be remarked in passing, Sargent is inconceivable save as a follower of the new, essentially modern régime.

It is interesting to consider the situation in Paris as he confronted it on his arrival twenty or twenty-five years ago. By that time the Barbizon painters had begun to reap the rewards of their long struggle with adversity, and impressionism had made some of its most violent incursions into the enemy's country. But the enemy was not by any means to be ejected in a day from his Academic citadel, and, moreover, to the young painter then feeling his way, the official exhibitions presented appeals which it would have required some courage and more stupidity for him to disdain. The truth is that there was a good deal going on in the Paris of Sargent's salad days which did not need a novel label to recommend it. Academic ideals were waning, but not all the Academicians, or all their fellow-believers in the artistic

principles handed down by the fathers, were committed to a soulless routine. If Cabanel was painting his correct and cold presentments of the *grande dame* of his day, Bonnat was modelling, with a kind of brutal energy, portrait after portrait of the statesman, the poet, and the soldier, and making them anything but cold. Degas himself, creating a new school, was not unmindful of an old one. He emulated, in his independent way, the classicist he adored — Ingres. There appeared in a New York gallery not long ago a souvenir of Degas in this backward-glancing mood of his, a portrait of a woman, which was a little sermon in itself against always looking for the virtues of change where change is most manifest. In some of its aspects this painting might pass for a page from the ante-impressionistic era. It has in it the sobriety and the rectitude of Ingres himself, and draws near to the "finish," while it assuredly possesses the solidity, characteristic of many an Academician. The note in the thing, of an aim new at that time, lies altogether in the quality of its execution, in the personal treatment of a scheme entirely impersonal, in beauty of modelling and tone.

It is the fashion to enhance applause of an innovator by contempt of the men he has risen to supplant. As a matter of fact there were capable painters before Manet, and contemporary with him, who had no impulse toward his subversive tendencies, and the formation of Sargent's style is the more interesting

to observe if we see it going on, not amid the harmonious teachings of a single school, but in a time of many movements and in one of transition into the bargain. The choice of a definite line of action at such a time involves the use of so much the more judgment and individuality. One point it is important to remember. Sargent, studying under the wing of Carolus-Duran, was in an atmosphere sympathetic to new ideas, but not at all inhospitable to old ones. While he emerged from his master's studio a modern in the best sense of the term, it was with a vein of conservatism in him which has never disappeared. Of how many modern painters, endowed, as he has been, with superabundant technical brilliance, could it be said that they have never exceeded a certain limit of audacity? I know of no canvas of his which could fairly be called sensational. One of the least conventional of painters, his art nevertheless remains adjusted to the tone and movement of the world in which he lives — surely a fine example of genius expressing its age. Like Degas, in the portrait aforesaid, he has poured new wine into an old bottle without breaking the bottle.

Thus far I have taken it for granted that it is of Sargent the portrait-painter we are speaking, yet his predestination to that rôle, which has since been made unmistakable, is not clear in the opening incidents of his career. He painted portraits, but he painted other more casual things, notably some Spanish and Vene-

tian subjects out of which he got all the charm of Southern picturesqueness, without any of its factitious and theatrical elements. I say "casual" advisedly, for some of the most characteristic of the earlier works I have in mind are, if not exactly unstudied, at all events chiefly admirable for the spontaneity and almost artless vivacity with which they record impressions of things seen. One of them is "A Street in Venice," in which two cloaked idlers watch a girl who passes them, her shawl drawn close about her, her face toward the spectator. "Venetian Bead Stringers," which dates apparently from the same period, is a shadowy interior with three figures. It is a long time since I have seen either of these paintings, but I retain as clearly as though I had seen them yesterday, a sense of the vitality in them; of their charm as of motives taken from common life and lifted at once out of the commonplace. The figures are so effectively placed, the light and shade playing about them are so skilfully directed, the touch is so fresh and so sure. Here is, in short, what Sargent, as the painter of such subjects, always gives us — a sane and winning naturalism.

Sometimes it has taken a delicately romantic tone. In a volume of "Spanish and Italian Folk-Songs," published by Miss Alma Strettell in 1887, six of the twelve illustrations are by Sargent. The frontispiece is a sketch of a gypsy dance, with figures thrust forth from, or almost buried in, mysterious gloom. One

of the plates in the body of the book is of a quaint image of the Madonna such as Southern peasants worship. In a second a woman draws back in terror from the mystic message of the cards whose power she has invoked; in a third a dancer, with superb gesture, is drawn with wonderful feeling for rhythmic motion; the next subject is a dainty garden scene, and the last is a Crucifixion. In all the drawings there is an emotion not of the surface, a hint that the painter has caught the strain of *macabre* poetry in his material. But even in these one cannot but feel that his salient faculty is that of the artist who labors most fruitfully "with his eye on the object," not with his imagination hovering around its inner secrets. How secure he has ever been from drifting, through this purely visual preoccupation, into the cruder naturalism of the French school — the influence of which was in the air in his younger days — is shown, even more than in these fugitive smaller essays, by the large picture of a Spanish dance, "El Jaleo," which he sent to the Salon of 1882 and which was for some years lent to the Fine Arts Museum of Boston by the gentleman in that city to whom it belongs.

I can imagine Sargent contemplating an inroad upon the Salon, remembering the conditions imposed by that storm-tossed arena upon the contributor who does not want to be swamped, and speculating as to whether this painting of his, in subject, scale, and treatment, would "do." Decidedly it would do.

"El Jaleo" is the kind of picture that would hold its own amid a host of *machines*. But I cannot imagine Sargent allowing anything of the *machine* to creep into it. He must know the language of the Parisian studios, but he does not speak it in his work. Perhaps it is his Florentine upbringing, steadying his taste; perhaps it is his effortless originality. Whatever the safeguard, he is as free from the *cliché* — and from vulgarity — in "El Jaleo" as he is, say, in his portrait of "Miss Beatrice Goelet," a painting in which the innocent sweetness of childhood unfolds itself like a flower. "El Jaleo," though it was in the Salon, was not of it. Like the Venetian studies just cited, it is a piece of naturalistic painting; every ingredient of visible passion, grace, and Spanish glamour which belongs to the famous dance, as I have seen it again and again in Seville and Madrid, is reflected as in a mirror; but there is no tincture of the photograph there. Merely as a realistic record of facts this makes the numerous studies of the same theme which have passed through the Salon, look forced and garish, its realism being of the higher order. Put its veracity aside and you still have what is, after all, the thing most worth having in the circumstances, — a beautiful work of art, beautiful in its rich darks, its luminous yet restrained yellows, its grouping of some eight or ten figures in a design which seems simplicity itself — until you take the trouble to analyze the balance of its movement, and the subtle co-ordination

of its values. What holds one, moreover, in this production of a young man still in his twenties, is its astonishing aplomb; the ease and keen unhackneyed "attack" with which the thing is done, proclaim a painter who has "arrived" and with whom modern art will henceforth have to reckon. It has been reckoning with him ever since, now breathless with admiration, now full of impatience and indignation over some ill-considered piece of work, but never indifferent.

One way of emphasizing this point is to face the fact that for years Sargent sent scarcely anything save portraits to the exhibitions. A great portrait is one of the greatest things in the world, but it is not, to-day, the portrait-painter of whom one would ordinarily hear most. The subject-picture has a way of taking the centre of the stage, and for years after "El Jaleo" was painted, Sargent did nothing save the charming "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose," to follow up the success of that work. His decorations for the Boston Public Library occupy a place apart in his activity, and form in no sense a sequence to his early triumph. Possibly we have lost by his abstention, though it may be that he gives us all that it is really delightful to have, outside of his portraiture, in such studies and sketches as those with which he amuses himself when on his travels, and in the intervals of painting portraits at home. At any rate, a good portrait by him has an interest quite as potent as that of a subject-picture. This, which is so true of him to-day, has

never been truer than it was when he was only nearing the threshold of his present extraordinary vogue. I might cite in evidence that noted portrait which he painted, in 1879, of his master, in worthy requital of all that Carolus-Duran had done in teaching him the rudiments of his profession. But an apter illustration is provided by the full-length he made of a famous Parisian beauty, Madame Gautreau. That inspiring personality we may see also in a brilliant half-length by Courtois, and it is most instructive to compare the two. The Frenchman's work is a polished piece of draughtsmanship. He has handled his motive somewhat in the vein of an old Florentine or Milanese profile, and has achieved a pure distinction in the contour, a delicacy in the tone, by virtue of which he has carried the panel through one exhibition after another, undiminished in its prestige. Sargent's much larger portrait, which he sent to the Salon two years after "El Jaleo," is inferior to it in linear austerity, and in atmosphere, as of something sculpturesque and fragile. But in everything else it is a much more striking performance. I need not pause upon the technique, save to note that it has a good deal of the characteristic Sargent effulgence, and an elasticity and breadth to which Courtois could lay no claim. What is important is the conception, which is as modern and personal as the other is neo-Italian and academic; and in addition there is the masterful accent of the man born to paint portraits, born to draw from

each of his sitters the one unforgettable and vital impression which is waiting for the artist.

People complain that Sargent violates the secret recesses of human vanity, and brings hidden, because unlovely, traits out into the light of day; that his candor with the brush is startling, to say the least, and sometimes even perilous. He is accused not simply of painting his sitter, "wart and all," but of exaggerating the physical or moral disfigurement. If this is true there is something humorous in the spectacle, which is constantly being presented, of men and women running the risk. But the risk is not so great as it seems. Take the portrait of Madame Gautreau. It is no encroachment upon the privacy of that lady to consider both portraits of her with brief reference to their original, and to observe that while Courtois gives us an enchanting variation on his theme, Sargent's canvas vibrates with the exquisite quality of the theme itself, in all its integrity. That is his great gift. He does not betray his sitter. He takes his or her essential traits and makes them the stuff of a kind of pictorial demonstration, interesting us in them profoundly. Few of his sitters seem, as we see them on the canvas, to have been passive in his hands. The electric currents of a duel are in the air. Character has thrown down its challenge, the painter has taken it up, and the result is a work in which character is fused with design, playing its part in the artistic unit as powerfully, and almost

as vividly, as any one of the tangible facts of the portrait. Where Madame Gautreau has received a happier commemoration at Sargent's hands than at those of Courtois, has been in the greater extent to which the American has allowed her to co-operate, as it were, with him. Her style, her atmosphere, the last, most evanescent perfume of her individuality, help enormously to make this portrait appealing not simply as a portrait, but as a painting. I cannot see in this any of the "risk" to which I have just referred. Complaint is apt to come, I fear, from those who cannot understand that the business of the portrait-painter is to tell the truth. That the truth happens to strike Sargent as a factor in portraiture of no less constructive importance than form or color is simply one of the proofs of his adequacy.

There is a good story of the late Coventry Patmore and the portrait of him by Sargent which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. Mr. Basil Champneys, in his biography of the poet, relates that when the work was finished and he went down to Lymington to see what the original declared to be "the best portrait which Sargent, or probably any other painter, had ever painted," it struck him as inclining toward caricature. Patmore asked for his opinion. "I told him," says Mr. Champneys, "that if the picture had been extended downwards there must have appeared the handle of a whip, and that he would then have been fully revealed as a sort of

Southern planter on the point of thrashing his slaves and exclaiming, 'You damned niggers!'" Patmore was pleased. "He always delighted in any tribute to his grasp of active life, and prided himself on his power of dealing blows to the adversary." Sargent had missed the aspect of "seer," which in later years had alone seemed to Mr. Champneys characteristic of his friend. Is posterity the loser? Will it receive a false impression of Patmore? I doubt it.

In the light of the long procession of portraits which he has put to his credit, it seems to me that if there is a living painter in whose interpretations of character confidence can be placed, it is Sargent. His range is apparently unlimited. He has painted Carmencita in all the pomp and insolence of her mundane beauty; and not only in the "Miss Beatrice Goelet," but in the "Hon. Laura Lister," the "Homer St. Gaudens," the "Master Goodrich," and "The Boit Children," he has treated adolescence with the most searching understanding. He has painted men and women in their prime and in their old age, and in whatever walk of life he has found them, he has apprehended them with the "seeing eye" that is half the battle. Actors, actresses, lawyers, architects, soldiers, painters, statesmen, poets, noblemen, commoners, men of affairs, and nobodies, all these has he painted and painted well, and, besides, he has portrayed the woman of fashion, in her infinite variety, with incomparable elegance and penetration.

When the historic representative exhibition of his works was given in Boston some years ago, I remember with what human interest the hall seemed filled. It was as though one were witnessing a great levee or other ceremonial, crowded with beautiful and distinguished personalities, and murmurous with living voices. Nowhere in that assemblage did the note seem forced. It was an irresistible play upon words in which Mr. Whistler indulged when he looked at the "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose," and said, "Darnation Silly, Silly Pose," but it was not criticism. It is worth noticing that it is not in his portraits of men, but in his portraits of women, who illustrate far more histrionically the nervous tension of the age, that Sargent has painted his most unconventional compositions. And when his subject has permitted him to exchange nervousness for repose, with what felicity he has seized his opportunity! There is not in modern portraiture a more satisfactory study in dignity and noble stateliness than his "Mrs. Marquand." On the other hand, the quality which is so well expressed in this canvas, while evidently accessible to Sargent when he is painting a single figure, escapes him on some other occasions when his task is more complicated. He could repeat the quiet pose of the "Mrs. Marquand" in his portrait of Lady Agnew, one of the most refined works he has ever painted, but in his group portraits, where poise is most needed, it is markedly absent — save in one monumental instance,

to be traversed below. Sometimes it hardly matters. The "Mrs. Carl Meyer and Children," for example, is so captivating in its Gallic lightness of feeling, so dazzling in its technique, that it were futile to quarrel with its composition — an application to portraiture of the principle of spontaneity which we have seen in action in his early Venetian sketches. "The Misses Vickers," which was painted in the middle eighties, some ten or twelve years before the "Mrs. Carl Meyer," also justifies itself through the sheer charm of the effect which the painter has secured from his lawless arrangement of forms. But what of "The Three Graces," as by common consent it was called, the big canvas (representing Lady Elcho, Mrs. Tennant, and Mrs. Adeane, the daughters of Mrs. Wyndham) which created a furore in the Academy? The uneasy balance of the thing was, in my opinion, only thrown into clearer relief by the presence of Watts's portrait of Mrs. Wyndham in the background, where Sargent had dimly indicated that fine souvenir of a modern exemplar of the grand manner. What of the other large group which he executed later, "The Misses Hunter"?

They are interesting paintings. Sargent could not be dull if he tried. But they do not seem, like his single portraits, or even like one of his double portraits, "The Daughters of Asher Wertheimer," to be — there is no other word — inevitable. There is work in them finer than anything any of his contem-

poraries could do — and there is the sense of artifice and effort, of lines teased into relations to one another which, when he is himself, Sargent never discloses. The trouble, I take it, is that he is groping through the intricacies of a formula, a thing foreign to his genius, and, what is more, foreign to his time. The only artists who have ever succeeded in doing the sort of thing Sargent has latterly been trying to do in these groups of his, have been painters like Mignard, Rigaud, Largillière, and the rest, in France, or like Sir Joshua, Gainsborough, and their school in England — men who have been born to a tradition half social and half artistic, and have therefore moved within its boundaries with unconscious ease. In his endeavor to reconcile the mode of the eighteenth century with the spirit of the twentieth, Sargent has "gone against nature," and, for once, his consummate ability has been set at naught. In other words, in these groups he is not himself; and in being himself, as cannot be too often reiterated, resides a great part of his strength.

He is himself in his reading of character, in his design, and in his style. To say this is not to forget his indebtedness, where style is concerned, to other painters, even to Carolus-Duran. I think there is something of Carolus-Duran in his mere cleverness, which, like so much that is fluent and self-possessed in modern craftsmanship, could have been developed in Paris and nowhere else. The broad, slashing

stroke of Hals has taught him something, it is fair to assume, and the influence of Velasquez in his work is sufficiently obvious. Yet there is not in all his painting the ghost of what it would be reasonable to call an imitative passage. The rapidity and *bravura* of Hals he recalls often enough, but never the Dutchman's blunt simplicity. The temperament of the racy old master and that of the cosmopolitan modern are poles apart. He revives sometimes, in terms of brushwork, the tradition of Velasquez, but it is not by brushwork alone that style is made; with the painter of "Las Meninas" and "Las Hilanderas," color is peculiarly important, and between color as he understood it, and Sargent's color, there is no connecting link. One is all limpidity and sober charm, even when it is in its higher keys. The other is sharp, vibrating, and, though always in good taste, never deep or tender. To see the point in a nutshell, compare the plangent brilliance of the costume in the portrait of Carmencita with the melting, bloomlike beauty of a dress worn by one of the Infantas of the Prado. The clear *timbre* of the older colorists, resonant and haunting, has always struck me as lying outside the scope of Sargent's art, if not, perhaps, incompatible with so militant and pyrotechnical a phenomenon. The differences between him and his illustrious predecessors go to the very root of the matter. He is no more a modern Hals or Velasquez than he is a modern Rembrandt or Botti-

celli, for he looks at life and art from a totally different point of view; not simply, or grandly, or tragically, or imaginatively, but with the detached, intellectual curiosity of a man of the world. He paints with a dexterity that is of the same modern, eclectic, and yet intensely individualized origin as his mental attitude. Of course he has profited by the great exemplars of technique. As a great technician he could not have done anything else.

He has his place in the hierarchy, and it is the place of a portrait-painter, for all that his pictures have such rare merit. To the latter he has given, of late, a large proportion of his energy, being weary, it is said, of portraiture. In the museums of Boston and Brooklyn there are large collections of his water-colors, showing with what *maestria* he has employed one of the lightest and most difficult of mediums; and it is common nowadays, too, for him to produce in oils such overwhelmingly brilliant paintings as the forest study called "The Hermit" in the Metropolitan Museum. His authority, indeed, in almost any field, would seem beyond cavil. Let him paint such an interior with figures as his "Diploma" picture at Burlington House — the grand sala of the Palazzo Barbaro in Venice — let him sketch a tangle of Venetian boats against an architectural background, or a gleaming marble quarry, or a scene in the Holy Land, or a Scotch salmon stream, or the courtyard of an old Spanish tavern, and so on through an interminable

list of subjects, and he is always uncannily competent, interesting to the point of being fairly exciting. And yet I doubt if any of these achievements will lessen the predominating significance in his career of that little cosmos which is composed of his portraits.

What a varied world it is, ranging from that early profile of a girl of Capri which, by the way, is one of the finest things he ever did, to the great canvas of "The Four Doctors," presented to Johns Hopkins University in 1907. I have already alluded to that as the monumental exception to Sargent's comparative incertitude in the painting of group portraits. He put the masterpiece together with impressive knowledge. The grouping of the figures, which is so natural, is also so wisely managed that it makes an interesting picture. Consider the way in which the heads and hands are treated, how simply, how accurately, with what grasp of anatomical structure. Consider the quality of the color. Black is one of the hardest colors in the world to use in a painting, for it may so easily be left merely black, and dull, but Sargent, using a great deal of it, rises above himself as a colorist, and, for once, gives us many modulations of tone, which are nowhere opaque, but everywhere have a semi-transparent vitality. And consider the style, how the brushwork shows, on every inch of the canvas, a kind of energy and strength, a quality, too, that is new and fresh, individual, as much Sargent's own as is his signature. It is a great portrait

because of its sound workmanship and the stamp of originality that is upon it; and there is another reason for calling it a great portrait, one linking it with the great portraits of the past and at the same time bringing us back to the actuality, the modernity, the sense of character, which I have already indicated as being so important in his art.

There hangs in the public gallery of The Hague in Holland one of the world's renowned pictures, Rembrandt's "The Lesson in Anatomy." Why is it that that painting is so famous? Partly because it is a good piece of workmanship, partly because of the strength of Rembrandt's style. But is it not also because those old doctors, leaning over toward the corpse in the foreground, and listening so eagerly to the words that we can almost hear as they fall from the lips of Dr. Tulp, are human beings, individuals who look at us across the gulf of time as though they lived and breathed? Those seventeenth-century figures are men like ourselves and we greet them with sympathy. It is because Sargent has done in this painting what Rembrandt did in his that it is a great portrait. It is a great portrait because, through the magic of Sargent's brush, future generations will look at the doctors in this painting, and greet them with sympathy. I cannot but feel that the painter exercised there a function higher than that whose action is to be discerned in other works of his, no matter how masterly, in other domains of art. The decora-

tions in the Boston Public Library, some of them in place long since and the rest now the object of his keenest solicitude, can but serve, in my opinion, to confirm this hypothesis. The new paintings when they appear may invite new reflections, but it seems incredible that they should utterly transcend the old ones. These represent a high ambition, they fill given spaces with imposing ideas eloquently expressed; but as decorations, in the strict sense, they want the unity which elsewhere Sargent so easily achieves. Some of the strongest elements in them are elements of portraiture — powerful characterization and bold, simple handling of forms in the now celebrated frieze of Prophets, and certain specific embodiments, like the Astarte or the Moloch, in the upper sections of the scheme at either end of the hall.

It is, then, as a portrait-painter that he stands head and shoulders above all his contemporaries, even his failures possessing an interest denied to many a clever artist's successes. Those failures he would probably be the first to acknowledge and deplore, and I dare say that they have been due to want of sympathy more than to anything else. In the Boston exhibition I have mentioned there were fifteen or twenty portraits executed during a visit paid to this country not long before. The good works and the bad ones in the lot were clearly those which had been done with enthusiasm and those which were perfunctory. If he had failed to wreak himself to good pur-

pose upon some of his subjects it was because they had given him no such inspiration as that by which he was moved when he painted, for example, the large portrait of Colonel Higginson for the Harvard Union. To the making of that he had brought warm feeling, and he lifted it to an almost heroic plane. When he paints pot-boilers he is lost. Not his most elaborate portrait of a gorgeous personage, set in the most luxurious surroundings, has, if he has put nothing but mere workmanship into it, anything like the interest which attaches to some such a sincere fragment as his sketch of the painter Helleu, working in the open air. His pencil portraits are uneven. They are only worthy of him when they reveal that caressing instinct for delicacy of linear effect which a long time ago he showed to such beguiling purpose in the sketch he painted of the wax bust at Lille attributed to Raphael. Yet in recalling the great mass of Sargent's work, I have been impressed by the comparative scarcity of portraits to which the word failure might in justice be applied — and by the disposition, moreover, of most of his successes to not merely fill the moment with their *éclat*, but to "wear well." Fortunate is the generation that is privileged to be painted by him!

The individual, I may add, is doubly fortunate in the experience, for to sit to Sargent is to receive precious light on the subject of the painter's art. Though I have no first-hand information on the point I can

nevertheless append here some authentic notes upon it. When the painting of "The Four Doctors" was unveiled at Johns Hopkins I had the privilege of speaking there on the art that had produced it and in the course of the evening I heard some remarks from one of the men in the group which struck me as of high value to the student. Dr. William H. Welch described his meetings with Sargent and what went on in the studio as he came back again and again to pose, and to me, as a critic, what he said gave precisely the little personal touches which help the historian to elucidate the manner in which a great portrait is made. I endeavored at the time to summarize the Doctor's words and with his permission I repeat their substance here.

His sketch of Sargent's personality was wonderfully true and vivid. He spoke of the painter as a tall, strong, altogether virile type; very agreeable to meet; a widely cultivated man, able to talk well on any subject that might be brought up. For example, Dr. Welch pointed out that the book he is supposed to be reading in the portrait is a seventeenth-century edition of Petrarch. He had alluded to a line in the writings of the poet, whereupon Sargent had brought out the volume, and had proceeded to talk in the most interesting manner about Petrarch and the Renaissance in general. He more than once tried to draw Sargent out on the subject of art, and always with suggestive results. Hals and Velasquez

were evidently the painter's most cherished masters. He talked so inspiringly about Hals, when Dr. Welch told him he had been looking at "The Laughing Cavalier," in the Wallace Collection, that, as soon as the Doctor was free to do so, that summer, he travelled to Haarlem to see the Dutch painter's great corporation groups there. He recalled a saying of Sargent's about Gainsborough — that having painted a thing he left it finished or unfinished, for good or ill, and did not try coldly to work it over and make it academically satisfactory after the fashion of Reynolds. It was impossible to listen to Dr. Welch without being made to realize the genuineness and attractiveness of Sargent's character and personality.

Speaking of the making of the portrait, Dr. Welch described Sargent as grouping his four sitters, over and over again, before he was satisfied. Sometimes he requested two of the doctors to stand, and then only one of them. He changed their positions, constantly. Before he began to paint, however, he settled upon the grouping that is shown in the completed portrait, and this, as Dr. Welch said, disposes of the assertion made by some critics that the composition had taken its form by accident and as the work proceeded. Dr. Welch also noted that the enlargement of the canvas by a piece joined at the side and another at the top was not unforeseen, but was mentioned by Sargent at the outset as a thing he expected to have done. The grouping, then, and the

scale of the portrait were fixed by the artist when he began, and so the sitters went on to do their part. They were sometimes all together in the studio, but not often. Sometimes three of them sat, sometimes two of them, but more often each doctor was posed by himself. Dr. Welch's head was painted practically in one sitting. He was struck by Sargent's unobtrusive way of studying him; he never felt that he was being closely scrutinized. Sargent talked constantly while he was at work, smoked innumerable cigarettes, and was always walking to and fro. When Dr. Welch asked him about this exercise, he said laughingly that he had once estimated that he walked about four miles a day in his studio. Though Dr. Welch's head was painted so quickly, the painter was not equally swift in his treatment of all the other sitters. Dr. Osler, especially, had to give sitting after sitting.

The work went forward, on the whole, with great smoothness. There were some difficulties, as when the portrait of Dr. Osler struck them all as a failure and Sargent painted it out and did it all over again. But then everything seemed to move swimmingly. Just at this time Sargent himself suddenly grew discouraged. He paused one day, and knitting his brow, and lifting his hand with a gesture of bewilderment, he said: "It won't do. It isn't a picture. I cannot see just what to do, but it isn't a picture." He stood for a little while thinking it over, and presently the clouds seemed to pass. He asked if there would be

anything incongruous about the introduction of a large, old Venetian globe into the background. It was in his other studio, he said, and he would have it brought around if it were permissible. Of course it was; and a day or two after, the globe was there. It was so large that he had to have the doorway chopped to get it into the room. (That was very like Sargent; he would have had an entire wall removed if it had been necessary in making the portrait a perfect work of art.) When they sat again with the globe in the background, Sargent studied the group with anxious interest, and then, in a swift stroke, drew the silhouette of the object on the canvas. "We have got our picture," he said, and the portrait as it stands shows with what unerring instinct he had thought of the one thing fitted to serve his purpose.

Dr. Welch had some very interesting things to say about the color scheme. He asked Sargent if he could wear his Yale robe, and the painter immediately acquiesced; but when Dr. Osler spoke of wearing his red Oxford robe, Sargent humorously forbade it, saying: "No, I can't paint you in that. It won't do. I know all about that red. You know they gave me a degree down there, and I've got one of those robes." Musingly, he went on. "I've left it on the roof in the rain. I've buried it in the garden. It's no use. The red is as red as ever. The stuff is too good. It won't fade. Now, if you could get a Dub-

lin degree? The red robes there are made of different stuff, and if you wash them they come down to a beautiful pink. Do you think you could get a Dublin degree? — No, I couldn't paint you in that Oxford red! Why, do you know they say that the women who work on the red coats worn by the British soldiers have all sorts of trouble with their eyes," etc., etc.

X

Spanish Art in Spain and Elsewhere

I. The Prado
II. The Prado Revisited
III. Velasquez at the Hispanic Museum
IV. The Rokeby Venus
V. El Greco and Goya
VI. Four Modern Spaniards:
    Fortuny
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X

SPANISH ART IN SPAIN AND ELSEWHERE

I

THE PRADO

THERE is a kind of artistic mastery so rare that the great painters of the past to whom it belongs form a small group apart, and even among those few there are fewer who have the gift untrammelled. By that gift is meant a control over the instruments of expression so absolute and so effortless that there seems to intervene between the conception of a design and its execution no more hesitancy than will be observed between the impulse of a bird to soar and its pause at the apex of its flight. Such mastery conveys the impression of an almost musical sequence in the evolution of a picture. In Velasquez it is found developed with positively classic symmetry. In his work the science of the composer, the instinct of the colorist, the intellectual and emotional intention of an observant thinker, and the imperturbable refinement of a man of taste, seem to have travelled

on simultaneously and in perfect harmony to the attainment of a common end. It is this more than anything else that makes him the most powerful artistic magnet south of the Pyrenees, if not the most eloquent oracle in Europe for whoever wishes to know the law of art as dictated, not by the dreamer, the poet, the dramatist, the moralist, but pre-eminently by the painter. It is this that makes the Prado a shrine.

I

Just how much of the potency of Madrid as an artistic Mecca is dependent upon works other than those of Velasquez it is necessary to state with some care. The city is one of the minor capitals of Europe architecturally, and the environment provided by nature for such monuments as it possesses is none of the best. The surrounding landscape is monotonous and bare. The few parks are pretty in themselves, and the famous promenade known as the Prado is broad and pretentious; but these attractions are insufficient to counterbalance the shabbiness of dusty, ill-kept streets, and dwellings in a dull, nondescript style. Life in Madrid is rendered diverting upon occasions of public rejoicing by the presence of the court, otherwise it is the same as in other large modern cities, like New York or London, only not so bright. The bull-ring alone may claim to be better managed in Madrid than anywhere else. This and the ball game

called *pelota*, which was brought recently from the Basque provinces, are the only important national spectacles, or old and picturesque institutions, which survive in the centre of Spanish political life.

There is little in Madrid itself, then, which makes it a temptation to wander from the highways of European travel. Very few of the buildings and collections, aside from the great museum, are worthy of a capital city. The most that can be said for the royal palace, an enormous building designed by a Piedmontese architect, Sacchetti, is that it has more simplicity than was usual in the late Renaissance period from which it dates, and that under one of the ravishing skies of which Spain is prodigal in spring and summer it has a regal dignity which is impressive, if the purely artistic features of the scheme are not. Of the armory attached to the palace it is possible to speak more cordially. It contains a marvellous collection of antique mail and weapons, and has the virtue, moreover, of being very well arranged. The Academy of San Ferdinand has some good pictures; and in the square before the royal palace there is a fine equestrian bronze of Philip IV, by the Florentine Tacca. In naming this slender body of creditable things I have fairly summarized, I believe, those monuments in Madrid which do not, at any rate, conflict with the glory concentrated in the Museum of the Prado. They are few enough.

But in the Royal Museum there exists a treasure

which might make the reputation of any capital. The actual building, lacking as it is in the first essential of an art gallery, well-lighted chambers, is yet in all other respects worthy of its contents. Charles III began it in the last century as an Academy of Natural History. The portrait of his architect, Juan de Villanueva, painted by Goya, hangs in the Academy of San Ferdinand. It shows a man of quick, intelligent faculties, but with the formal placidity of his time, the very man from whom a design with the stately lines of the museum was to be expected. He produced an excellent building for his royal patron; commonplace, perhaps, but in good taste and dignified. It was long in coming to completion. The death of its founder saw it unfinished. Charles IV, who aimed to carry out the plan of his predecessor, was no more expeditious in the erection of the edifice. Early in this century it narrowly escaped being put in shape by the French as a picture-gallery. Joseph Bonaparte entertained some such idea, and would doubtless have put it into execution had not the peninsular wars diverted this as well as many another ambitious project.

When Ferdinand VII was re-established upon the throne of Spain the building was much in need of repairs. These were made under the advice of his wife, Maria Isabel of Braganza. She advocated the use of the structure as a museum of art, and in the fall of 1819 three rooms were hung with three hundred

and eleven pictures. Another gallery was opened in 1821; others followed in 1828, 1830, and 1839 respectively; and in 1892, under the regency, the most satisfactory room in the building was redecorated and rearranged. This is the Sala de la Reina Isabel, a spacious gallery, which corresponds in relative significance to the Salon Carré of the Louvre and the Tribuna of the Uffizi. It was used as such, which is to say for the display of the choicest gems of all the schools, until 1899, when, in celebration of the third centenary of the birth of Velasquez, it was consecrated solely to his works. The pictures are chiefly the property of the crown, having been drawn from the palace in Madrid, from the Escorial, from other royal residences, and from the monastic bodies whose property was confiscated to the state early in the thirties. At the present time there are over two thousand pictures sheltered in the Museum of the Prado — so called from the *prado* or meadow extending along the eastern side of Madrid, which was transformed by Charles III into the promenade now celebrated in the history of the city.

It is a splendid patrimony that is enshrined in the Prado. Beginning with Isabel the Catholic, in the fifteenth century, the older Spanish sovereigns had a passionate taste for art and abundant means wherewith to gratify it. Isabel was a generous collector of the religious art of her epoch. Charles V, the Emperor, was the patron of Titian, and accumulated

among many precious pictures by other artists a large number from the hand of Antonio Moro, one of the first of Dutch portrait-painters. Philip II inherited his father's enthusiasm for the great Venetian, and added also numerous Italian and Flemish works to the collection of his house. The royal ardor for collecting was abated in the reign of Philip III, but it was resumed in the most earnest dilettante of them all, Philip IV, himself a painter, a tireless seeker after the masterpieces of Italian painting, and, what is more particularly to our purpose, the friend and patron of Velasquez. Philip's interest in art knew no bounds. It was for him that the Spanish ambassador in London, Alonso Cardenas, attended the sale of the pictures of Charles I and paid £2000 for the "Perla" of Raphael. Foreign powers knew that no gifts were more welcome than pictures by noted artists, and to their friendliness we owe some of the best things in the Prado. In Flanders the King's brother and Viceroy, Don Ferdinand, secured him dozens of valuable pictures by the masters of that region. When Rubens came on an embassy to the King he remained for nine months, during which time his activity in the service of the court was prodigious. Philip had finally the harvestings of two journeys which Velasquez made to Italy, partly in the King's interest and partly in his own. Truly the ruler so pliant under the crafty hand of his minister Olivarez was an indefatigable amateur. Philip was the finest horseman and the most culti-

vated connoisseur in Spain. No one is known to have equalled him in either field. There have been costly additions to the royal collection since his death, but it may justly be said that Philip IV and Velasquez set the capstone to the Museum of the Prado.

II

When Velasquez was appointed court painter and came to live in Madrid, in 1623, there was no museum there, but, as I have shown, there had been gathered together by the kings of Spain, and scattered among their palaces, hundreds of the pictorial triumphs of Italy and Flanders. Philip was adding to them as rapidly as he could. It is possible to study in the Prado to-day much that contributed to the atmosphere into which Velasquez was thrown, and in which for the rest of his life he lived. It affected him in no positive way, but it is worth examination for its own sake. It was an Italian atmosphere chiefly, and it was warm with the sensuous tones of the Venetian school. Until the rise of Velasquez there was no great art indigenous in Spain, and the only eminent painter born in the country, Ribera, had early migrated to Italy, and developed his art under the naturalistic influence of Caravaggio. Ribera had also, without knowing it, something of the mechanism of Rembrandt — something of his sleight of hand in placing a figure in such an arrangement of light that its sa-

lient points of anatomy and expression were brought into sharp relief. We shall see how Velasquez profited by his example. The Spaniards were fond of Ribera's melodramatic style; his persistent choice of harrowing subjects from the martyrology of the Church appealed to a race nurtured on the horrors of the Inquisition, and his works abound in Spain. But the court was anxious for some contrast to the sombre tones of the Escorial and the Alcazar, and it happened that this major period of Spanish connoisseurship synchronized with the rich afterglow of the Italian Renaissance. Circumstances thus combined to bring to Madrid before all other works the sunny canvases of the colorists in the north of Italy, Veronese, Tintoretto, and Titian. The three were masters in a period of decline, but their decadence was ablaze with the magic of a thousand sunsets.

Titian is superb in Madrid. There may be apprehended the poetic passion of his bacchanalian "Ariadne," the sweep and majesty of his "Charles V on Horseback," the bewitching, supple grace of his "Salome," the quaintness and mediæval fancy of his "Venus-Worship," the distinction of his portraiture in some of its best manifestations, and in all the twoscore works the glow of his matchless palette. Nowhere in Europe can the compass of the art which brought forth his easel paintings be more adequately measured than in Madrid. To estimate his work as a mural painter it is necessary to visit Padua, but as

a portrait-painter, and as a designer of compositions on a moderate scale, he is, through the liberality of the monarchs of Spain, as much the property of their country as of his own. Though the scope of Veronese, on the other hand, is better ascertained in Venice than in Madrid, there are nevertheless some priceless works of his in the Prado, among them a "Jesus Disputing with the Doctors," which recalls the great banquet scene in the Academy at Venice in the symmetry and architectural character of its grouping. Veronese is most victoriously himself, most dazzling, and most a designer of original genius in the Venetian picture and in his ceiling decorations, yet he figures brilliantly in the Spanish collection, being one of its principal pillars.

So also is Tintoretto, little as there is in the Prado to rival the stupendous decorations of the Ducal Palace and the Scuola di San Rocco. There is at least a gorgeous sea-fight of his, there are some of his most successful portraits of Venetian noblemen, and in two compositions in the same vein as much of his Italian work — a "Death of Holofernes" and a "Rape of Lucretia"— he touches his topmost level as a designer and a strenuous, energetic brushman. In the latter capacity, in fact, Tintoretto shines so conspicuously, and he was so sure, therefore, to be one of the first favorites of the Spanish court, that it is somewhat surprising to find not more than nine or ten of his important works in the Prado. The *brio* in his execution, the easy, virile movement of his

brush, were precisely in the spirit of Philip IV, as may further be inferred from the regard in which the latter held Rubens — a painter of remarkably kindred style.

Over threescore works by Rubens adorn the Prado, some of them collected prior to his nine months' embassy to Madrid in 1628–9, but most of them dating from that period. For the student of this painter they render the Spanish capital a second Antwerp, or, indeed, a more important city than that on the Scheldt. Great as the master's "Descent from the Cross" in the Cathedral of St. Jacques may be, it expresses less concisely than the numerous works in the Prado the peculiar *cachet* of his talent, the blend of courtly, artificial refinement with the coarse temper of the Low Countries that not all his experiences in noble society fitted him to shake off. Van Dyck was the only Fleming who could ever paint a gentleman, or throw over sitters of less fortunate birth an air of good breeding drawn from his own nature. To prove this is an easy task in the Prado, where some half-dozen of his finest portraits are assembled, where the tenderness of his "Pieta" may be set against the robust materialism and shallow sentiment of Rubens's treatment of the same theme, where the buxom lines of the latter's "Marie de' Medici" may be viewed in the light of the unsurpassed elegance of Van Dyck's "David Ryckaert," one of the really distinguished portraits in the world.

The naturalism of Rubens was florid, even a trifle

vulgar. He lacked reticence and equability of spirit. Side by side with the theatricality and ornamental conceit which embroidered with the most curious accessories of costume and *étoffage* those pictures of "Andromeda," "The Garden of Love," "The Judgment of Paris," "The Three Graces," and so on, which give the Prado its principal memorials of a princely, luxurious, *rococo* point of view — side by side with those elements of decorative power goes an impenetrable coarseness, which at times might be given a coarser name. Yet it is in Rubens, more than in any of the Venetians, that the student of Velasquez begins to find himself on familiar ground, for Rubens had in one of its phases the mastery which is the property and fame of his Spanish contemporary. His elaborate equestrian portraits of Philip II and the Infante Don Ferdinand foreshadow even more pointedly than Titian's "Charles V" the masterpieces by Velasquez in the same field that were destined to eclipse them all. That Rubens had an actual influence, more or less deep, upon Velasquez is often asserted, but it is hard to prove, and is much easier confuted. He prefigured the well-known second manner of Velasquez, it is true, but in no sense that might imply imitation or emulation on the part of the Spaniard, and it is well to make a careful comparison of the two. They were in sympathy on certain points, especially on the question of an elastic, flowing method of execution, but there is no evidence in the pictures

of Velasquez that his intimacy with Rubens at the time of the latter's visit to Madrid, in 1628, resulted in the expansion of his style which soon after became noticeable. The events came very near to each other in point of time, but it was a coincidence of chronology, nothing more.

It is far more likely that Velasquez changed his style under the influence of the masters whom Rubens himself adored, and whom he studied on his visit to Italy in 1629, though this hypothesis is also entirely gratuitous. As will presently be shown, the art of Velasquez had no antecedents. It appears the more improbable, moreover, that he should have been touched to any higher efforts by the example of Rubens, when the temperaments of the latter and himself are considered. He was the very antithesis of the Fleming. Both were courtiers, but one was an hidalgo from his infancy, and the other was a child of circumstance, a favorite of fortune, who rose from obscurity to renown, carrying with him the instincts of his commoner origin. Little as Velasquez had of the religious sensitiveness which distinguishes the Italians of the golden age, he was far more likely to be stirred in the very heart of him by those meditative men than by the poorly disguised sensuality of Rubens. As a matter of fact, not even the thrilling sweetness of the primitives, whose works he must have seen in Rome and Florence, entered into the composition of his style, and there are paintings in

the same lofty mood by the later Italians in the Prado, paintings with which he was presumably familiar, that not in the slightest degree colored his style or altered his outlook.

There is something curious and baffling in this aloofness. One wonders how so delicately perceptive a painter could have resisted the appeal of the more elevated Italians. There is a magnificent group of Raphaels in the Prado. But had these pictures any drastic effect upon Philip's great painter? Was he touched by the divine abstraction in the Urbinate's Madonnas? Did he feel the intellectual power, if not the spiritual significance, of the "Christ Bearing the Cross," a work that within its comparatively small dimensions rivals in constructive perfection the greatest frescoes of the master? On the contrary, it is recorded that in a conversation with Salvator Rosa, the Spanish painter expressed a frank distaste for the Academic art of Raphael, and a strong preference for the Venetians. He could appreciate the masterly draughtsmanship which renders Raphael's portrait of Bibbiena in the Prado a miracle, but it is only necessary to compare that keen performance with the portrait of another Italian prelate by Velasquez, the "Innocent X" of the Doria Palace in Rome, to see how far removed the fiery directness of the Spaniard was from the cool, calm subtlety of the Italian. I cannot imagine, either, Velasquez pausing with any great contentment before the few other spiritualized Italian

works now brought together in the Prado — the exquisitely pathetic "Virgin" of Giovanni Bellini, Lorenzo Lotto's charming "Betrothal," or the "Madonna with Saints," once attributed to Giorgione but now to Titian, which seems to me the most rare and beautiful foreign gem in the entire collection. Del Sarto and Correggio did not, it is safe to say, interest him in the least. Nor could he have had much taste for the patient, austere, and polished art of Van der Weyden, Memling, and Van Eyck, three masters who are represented in Madrid at their best. He would have given them all for some glittering figure from Titian's imperious brush. Even that he would have held on his own terms, as an inspiration, and not as a model.

III

That Velasquez was the most isolated of artists is the first and last conviction enforced upon the mind by a search for anticipations of him through the foreign art of his time, and the conviction deepens as the art of his own country is explored. That he had no successors is a commonplace of history, and that he had no precursors is equally certain. The first fruits of pictorial art in Spain, produced in the fifteenth century by a number of painters, were thin echoes of the primitives of Italy and the Low Countries. Juanes and Morales, who came later, were un-

worthy followers of the Roman school, founded partly on the basis of his Umbrian training by Raphael; and Sanchez Coello, who died a decade earlier than the birth of Velasquez, cultivated and handed on to his pupil Pantoja de la Cruz an excessively minute but admirable style of portraiture, which he had himself derived from Moro. Coello's best two portraits in the Prado, those of Don Carlos and Doña Isabel Clara Eugenia, the son and daughter of Philip II, show that he understood well the careful, dry method of the Dutchman; but there is no more in these than there is in Moro's own beautiful "Queen Mary of England," or in any other of his pictures in the Prado, to suggest the artist soon about to assume the sceptre in the peninsula.

It was the same with the contemporary countrymen of Velasquez. At the time of his birth — he first saw the light on June 5, 1599 — there was little art of a good quality native to the Spanish soil, and a master with the seeds of his own splendid style within him was utterly unknown. The parents of Velasquez, Juan Rodriguez de Silva and Geronima Velasquez, were well born, and of sufficient means for their son to be given the best of teachers, yet when his apprenticeship was begun their choice was confined to a small handful of men of whom not one had decided power and originality. They placed him for a time, it is believed, with Francisco Herrera, a painter whose turbulent mannerisms may be seen at their

worst, or best, as you choose, in the huge "San Hermengilda" of the Prado. Later, when in about his thirteenth year, Velasquez entered the atelier of Francisco Pacheco, an ingenious critic and theorist, but a poor painter in an academic style, which is illustrated by his four pictures of saints in the Prado. If he taught Velasquez anything, we may judge from these laboriously executed panels that he grounded his pupil well in the rudiments of drawing. All this it is necessary to state with emphasis, because one of the things that most make Velasquez interesting is the detachment to which I have already referred. Elsewhere in Europe the effect of the Renaissance was as universal as it was deep. In Italy the great wave of culture on which the painters were borne brought not two or three, but a whole race of artists to the enrichment of a wider civilization. In Spain the broad sea of insularity was only rippled by a current that flowed near its surface from Italy. The more important names that were lifted above the horizon, Zurbaran, Cano, and even the sentimental Murillo, were not of the first magnitude, and Velasquez emerges from the depths, unheralded, solitary, and commanding, one of the unique phenomena in history. Full five years he is thought to have labored under Pacheco, but the most for which we have to thank the latter is that he gave Velasquez his daughter in 1618, when the student was nineteen, and that he was his constant friend and admirer, smoothing his

way to the court with letters of introduction that were of substantial service.

The first visit paid to the capital by Velasquez, soon after the accession of Philip IV, then a mere youth, in 1621, was futile in so far as his dearest wish was concerned. He hungered for a place at court. In 1623 a portrait of his friend Fonseca, an influential officer in the royal household, obtained him a sitting from the King, and the equestrian portrait of the latter which he executed then won him his appointment in the same year. This portrait of Philip, which has long since disappeared, brought him the special interest of the King and the protection of Olivarez, who was daily growing in power. From this time on Velasquez remained at court, his life being unmarked by any episodes more striking than a visit to Venice, Rome, and Naples in 1629, and another to Italy twenty years later. These journeys were made for purposes of study and for the purchase of works of art for the King. In 1660, when Velasquez was in his sixty-first year and his master was a man of fifty-four, the court made a tedious journey to San Sebastian to meet Louis XIV. Velasquez, who during his entire sojourn at court held numerous offices, attended the King upon this occasion as a kind of chamberlain, arranging fêtes and accommodations for Philip and his suite. The exertion brought him back to Madrid in a state of exhaustion, and a month after his arrival home he was

smitten with a fever which ended his life on Friday, August 6, 1660. He was a Knight of the Order of Santiago when he died, and the most celebrated painter of his nation. These are the outlines of his career. His pictures tell the rest.

IV

There are more than sixty paintings by Velasquez in the Prado, a collection comprehending the greater proportion of his work, all of his most famous compositions, and, in fact, everything that is needed for a complete survey of his genius. If the earliest of these pictures bring us at once back to the question that has been touched upon above, the external forces that may have gone to the formation of his style, it need at least be considered but momentarily. The expatriated Ribera alone, of all the artists with whose works Velasquez ever came in contact, exercised any influence upon him, and that influence was slight. He confirmed in Velasquez a quality native to the latter—a tendency to employ chiaroscuro as a prime factor of artistic expression. In the first works of Velasquez his resolution to obtain an artistic effect by means of more or less artificial light is clearly visible. The "Bacchus" is an eloquent testimony to this. The "Adoration of the Kings" is another, and the two full-length portraits of the youthful Philip and his brother the Infante Don Carlos are both

based on the assumption that a figure costumed in black, thrown against a neutral background and with the light concentrated on the hands and wristbands, face and collar, will detach itself from its surroundings readily and with clearness. Something in the studied arrangement in these pictures, something in the deft fashion of illumination used in them all, may have been the outcome of the regard in which Velasquez is known to have held Ribera's work. But his fibre is already his own, and it is just here that one of the most remarkable ingredients in the art of Velasquez is approached.

In all his works, from the "Bacchus," painted within a few years of his arrival at court, to "Las Hilanderas," which marks the culmination of his art, Velasquez seems endowed with a delicacy of poise, a serene refinement of feeling, which excluded everything that savored of roughness in the texture, turbidness in the color, or eccentricity in the design of a work of art. This characteristic of supreme discrimination, a characteristic of impeccable taste, was one of the things that in Velasquez took the place of high imagination. For he was not imaginative in the creative sense. This is plain from the absence of any poetic felicity in his few sacred and mythological compositions. There is no more ideality, there is no more religious inspiration, in the "Coronation of the Virgin," which stands at the termination of his career, than there is in the "Adoration of the Kings," which stands at the beginning, or in the "Crucifixion,"

which comes between. It is useless to look in "The Forge of Vulcan," done in the surcharged atmosphere of Rome, or in the "Mars" and the "Mercury and Argus," both much later works, for such a sympathetic realization of remote, poetic personalities as exists in Raphael's Farnesina decorations, for example, or in Botticelli's "Primavera." What Velasquez did have, however, that enabled him to exert a lasting fascination, was that critical imagination which at its best amounts to clairvoyance. He could not body forth a scene from Biblical history or profane literature and shed over it the supernatural air by which it is to be most truly identified. He most assuredly could group his models in such a way as to produce a marvellous balance of lines and masses, of light and shade, and then he could divine in each figure all the significance, less than poetic, with which that material symbol could be credited.

It must be remembered that Velasquez was primarily a portrait-painter, and that his first aim was to penetrate to the core of his model's individuality. This he did with unerring intuition, and on this plane his range was boundless. It embraced the winning charm of the two little girls whose portraits in the Prado are said to represent the daughters of Velasquez, Ignacia and Francisca; and at the other extreme he was capable of producing such a strange compound of senility and bilious intelligence as is illustrated in the "Æsop." The companions of that incarnation of buoyant adolescence which we have in

the portrait of "Prince Balthasar on Horseback" are the equestrian portraits of Philip and Olivarez — the one showing a man who, on horseback at least, was the virile, kingly commander Velasquez has represented him to be; the other a commentary on the Machiavelian, underhand character of the King's prime minister, which all the records of the time unite to indorse. Every type seems to have been approached with equal sympathy by this shrewd, thoughtful painter, and he passes with inimitable celerity and sureness from the open, rugged features of his friend Montañes (erroneously known from this portrait as Alonso Cano) to the truculence of "Pernia," the shallow slyness of "Don Juan of Austria," and the nervous declamatory habit of "Pablillos," giving to each of Philip's three buffoons a character that once apprehended is impossible to banish from the memory or to confuse with any other. In the figure of Spinola, which fills the centre of "Las Lanzas," a veritable ideal of martial dignity is preserved, and in the five portraits of the court dwarfs — "El Primo," "Sebastian Morra," "El Bobo de Coria," "El Niño de Vallecas," and "El Inglés" — there is expressed with more searching analysis, with more appalling fidelity, than you will find in the grotesques of Dürer, Signorelli, or Leonardo, the curiously sinister combination of puerility and eerie wisdom which science and superstition alike discover in the malformed nature.

V

Velasquez was no dramatist. He neither sought nor devised a situation in which some momentous electrifying occurrence was accomplished. In "The Forge of Vulcan" and in "The Surrender of Breda" he comes nearest to the representation of a serious, moving crisis, and even in these the predominating impulse is not one of action suddenly liberated. But in this very connection he reveals his extraordinary skill in seizing the appearance of nature and fixing it still palpitating upon the canvas. Modern painters talk of motion in art as though it were worth recognition only in representations of impetuous action, like the charge of a cavalry regiment or the leap of an acrobat. Velasquez saw that all life is necessarily movement, that repose is only movement suspended, and his figures are not arrested in space, they are but pausing of their own volition, a distinction upon which the whole theory of motion in art may be said to hinge. Breathing, thinking, alive with all the sensations of concrete beings, his kings and councillors, huntsmen and *enanos*, buffoons and soldiers, hesitate there on the canvas ere they step from their frames with something of the weird immobility which De Quincey has described in his essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*." The spectator is aware in the painting of Velasquez, as the English writer was

aware in the great scene of the tragedy, of a moment's veil between the petrifaction of a deathlike solitude and the ringing sounds of a world thickly peopled. No painter ever surpassed Velasquez in this poignancy of realism, and I am inclined to say that no one ever equalled him. No one, at any rate, ever presented his interpretation of nature with so little of subjective annotation, with so little rhetoric of technique. The Spaniard was content if he set down what he divined in the man before him. He divined much, a great deal more than would have been yielded to most other men, yet he leaves the King, or whoever else it may be, to make his own confession, as it were, to the interlocutor of posterity. And the confession, so far as it can be so on canvas, is complete. Where it justifies itself, too, where it demonstrates its veracity, is in never telling too much. A false note is never struck. A lesser man — the Ribera, for instance, from whom he may have imbibed some of his early ideas; the Rubens with whom his name is to be coupled only with the utmost care — inevitably pitches the key too high. Velasquez never rose above a certain resonant, judicious chord, a chord which grew richer, fuller, and mellower as he progressed, but never passed the limits of harmony, taste, and nature.

This is apparent in every relation of his art. It may be observed in the attitudes and actions of his personages, in the heroic but entirely normal lines of

his horses, which are as interesting, very nearly, as the riders bestriding them. It is proclaimed in the current of animation which pervades "The Surrender of Breda," a picture that is monumental, commemorative, without being in the faintest degree "built up" or conventional; in the delightful, intimate grouping of "Las Meninas"; in the spontaneity of "Las Hilanderas," which in the beauty of its design seems the invention of an artist, and in the uninterrupted music of its talk and work carries the close effect of a photograph. Everywhere there is freedom from any hint of mechanical composition exceeding the decorum of life; everywhere there are revelations of nature studied and transferred to the canvas with its gait still quivering. But it was not only in the mysteries of motion that Velasquez was deeply versed. He was the first of the Impressionists, taking the epithet in its bearing upon problems of lighting. The illumination of his pictures was one of the most pressing questions involved in the unfolding of his style. In his first period, which was characterized by a dry and rather Academic style of draughtsmanship, and in which his color sense was satisfied with tints few and subdued, the lighting is accomplished by means which, though not mechanical and unduly arbitrary, have still a certain slightly artificial precision about them. The light and shade in the "Bacchus," so far as can be perceived in the present sad condition of the canvas, are handled obviously as parts of a pre-

arranged scheme. In "The Forge of Vulcan," painted when the artist was about thirty years old, he arrived at the point of transition between this cautious method of his early manhood and the authoritative freedom of his prime. With the "Vulcan" he began the broadening of his brushwork, which was continued to the end, making his execution ever more free and rapid, his touch lighter, and at the same time more crisp and forcible; and parallel with this development of his handling grew a richer and deeper scheme of color. But most of all does the beauty of his lighting grow more in the likeness of the beauty of nature. In the group of equestrian portraits belonging to his second period, in "Las Hilanderas" and "Las Meninas," the crowning glories of the third style, color and design are brought to a high degree of perfection, but they would have little effect were not the pictures suffused by a light so natural that all thought of the studio, of artistic sophistication, instantly disappears.

This point makes a convenient corollary to the summary of the painter's three periods, which might be given as follows: The second period, typified best by "The Surrender of Breda," the equestrian portraits, and the portraits of the three huntsmen, is differentiated by a greater flexibility of style and by a heightening of color from the earliest period, which produced the "Bacchus" and the standing portraits of Philip IV and his brother Don Carlos. In the third period,

that of "Las Hilanderas," Velasquez achieves a subtler gradation of tone, and restricts himself, on the whole, to a narrower scale of color, while loosening more than ever his brushwork and drawing. The development of his lighting is from first to last in a rising scale.

The relapse of Velasquez from the blues, russets, and carmines of his "Prince Balthasar on Horseback" to a scheme of color so much less brilliant in "Las Meninas" that that product of his maturity is, in respect to warmth, hardly more pronounced than his first works, does not by any means lower his rank as a colorist. Velasquez was never a colorist in the modern sense — never a colorist like Monticelli, Diaz, or John La Farge — loving color for its own sake. He had instead the most complete command of any artist who ever lived over that part of a colorist's province which is signified in the word "value." He understood the relation of one color or tone to another, the relation of the lowest blue to the highest, of the highest white to the lowest red. "Las Meninas," with its masses of silvery neutral tone, its simple blacks and whites, with a few touches of green and red in the costumes, is not merely a masterpiece of design, perspective, and portraiture. It is, without exaggeration, the most perfect study of color, of values, in the world. The opinion is freely expressed, for the march from the first great pictures of Velasquez to the last is so unswerving and in such a swell-

ing measure that the superlative degree is unavoidable at the end. Each one of the numerous pictures in the Prado contains if anything a little more pleasure than the last. Bacchus, with his merry companions, drawn from a race as Spanish as his own; Apollo, standing in his tawny robe beside the swarthy Vulcan; the young prince on his pony, prancing in a landscape as fresh and as lovely as though painted yesterday; Philip himself, at half a dozen stages of his specious, ill-starred existence; and all the other figures of an era never to be forgotten; the warriors of "The Surrender of Breda," and the peaceful women of "Las Hilanderas" — come back from the past wearing an aspect that can never fade, for, in so far as vitality is concerned, every generation will say, as this one must, that they come with the last accent of modernity.

One can never be quite certain that the personal equation is not affecting one's judgments, and it may be an old and deep sympathy for the haunting beauty of the Italians of the Renaissance which would make it impossible for me to enter the gallery where "Las Hilanderas" hangs without going first to certain Venetian masterpieces which hang in other rooms near by. Yet I must add that while they touch the imagination more subtly, more passionately, the impression that remains upon the mind in the clearest, sharpest outlines is of "Pablillos"; it is of the girl winding the wool in the foreground of "Las

Hilanderas"; it is of the haughty irresolute King; or, most unforgettable of all, it is of his glorious young son, the Prince Balthasar, linking one's thoughts by an unmistakable association of ideas with the words of Vernon to Hotspur:

> "I saw young Harry — with his beaver on,
> His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd —
> Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
> And vaulted with such ease into his seat
> As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
> To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
> And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

To evoke such an image, and with such rhythm and felicity, required the pen of a Shakespeare or the brush of a Velasquez.

II

THE PRADO REVISITED

To see a foreign country for the first time is surely one of the great sensations of life, but to revisit it, especially after a long absence, is even more interesting, though not perhaps so exciting. When you discover Italy — and every traveller discovers Italy for himself — it is next to impossible to co-ordinate your impressions. It is a world in itself and it must be explored again and again, in the light of devoted study, before its treasures are seen in a really man-

ageable perspective. It is as though one familiarized himself little by little with the contents of an incredibly vast museum. In other lands it may be other things that matter, things having nothing to do with the mere mass of stuff to be seen but with the genius of a people. The fact has been brought home to me by a return to Spain. Some sixteen or seventeen years ago, when I visited that country for the first time, chance took me through its southern gateway. Nothing could be more delightful, but I have since learned that if you want to plunge straight into the spirit of Spanish art the best approach is from the North, and it is best made with some swiftness in the heart of winter.

I

Spanish art is grave, austere, the fruit of a civilization which was dominated by a rigidly formal court and penetrated to its very core by the discipline of the Roman Church at the height of its power. There was nothing blithely sensuous about it in the heyday of its development. Its masters were no light-hearted adventurers, pursuing beauty for its own sake, but sober craftsmen, obediently filling the orders of royal and clerical patrons. Moreover, climatic and social conditions and certain harsh racial traits played into the hands of Church and State. Now one is scarcely put into the mood to realize the full significance of all

this by summer wanderings in Andalusia. When I went slowly up to Madrid, after indolent days in the Alhambra and in towns like Cadiz and Seville, I was quite ready to believe forever in the "sunny Spain" of countless books of travel, and I was the less prepared to readjust my point of view because I had been absorbed in the suave traditions of Italian art. Spanish pictures seen in England and in the various galleries of Europe had not quite prepared me for the revelations of the Prado, where alone the art of the country is to be studied at full length. My first intimation of the atmosphere I was to find there came in the course of a long ride by diligence to Jaén. I began then to taste the quality of the Spanish landscape in its dustier, stonier aspects, to forget orange-trees and gypsy dancers in the presence of barren hillsides and sombre, brown-cloaked shepherds, standing lonely against the sky. Later, as I came to see more of Spain, I understood that when she is barest and bleakest she is most herself, most the Spain of Velasquez. If there is one spot on which more than on any other in the whole country you get the key to the problem it is beneath the cold walls of the Escorial, on a day of drifting mist or when the wind comes down like a knife from the Guadarrama. Enter the grimly solemn church and look up at the royal worshippers on either side, kneeling in bronze with their faces turned to the high altar. The soul of Spain is there.

It took time to find it out, but travelling in winter, down to Madrid from San Sebastian, I seemed hardly to have crossed the threshold before the Spanish characteristics which had once been so elusive fairly leaped to the eye. You recognize them as the fertile valleys give way to rock-strewn plains, and you pass widely scattered farms and huddled hamlets, the latter shutting all their doors and windows in the winter twilight, and seeming, beneath the inevitable church tower, as though in a deathlike sleep. The sky is intensely blue, and, with a stupendous round moon floating in it, it is ineffably cold. Trains are none too rapid in Spain, and you get a good sense of the country from your car window. It looks a ghostly and forbidding land. Some stretches of it, past which you glide in an unearthly light, might be abandoned Golgothas, scenes of unbearable tragedy. When you have reached Segovia in the night and have driven to your hotel under the old Roman aqueduct you have been initiated into Spanish art. The initiation continues next day, when the cold is still terrific, but when a blazing sun makes the weather endurable, and, besides, makes the prospect clear for miles around. On a spur of the hill on which the town is built there stands the ancient Alcazar, and on the terrace at its base there are stone benches where one may sit and gaze over the country. It is all bare and brown, with stone walls marking out many of the fields, the houses lying far apart, flat and yel-

low structures, with their red tiled roofs faded to a soft rose, and mile on mile of high-road travelling snakily past them toward the church-crowned village on a distant hill. It is a strange sight, and that in it which most touches the imagination is its calm and irresistible assertion of an ancient, unchanged character. Revery at Segovia may be colored by all manner of rich and romantic associations drawn from innumerable chapters of history, but at bottom the one motive which persists is that which cries aloud from the immemorial countryside, the hardness and the patience, the melancholy and the courage, which have gone to the making of the Spanish genius.

II

It is good to get back to the Prado. There is no other museum quite like it in the world. For one thing it has been in exceptionally safe hands. The craze for picture cleaning which has done so much harm in so many European galleries has left Madrid untouched. There are paintings in Vienna and Berlin which look as though they had had their faces washed once a week for years; they shine with an abhorrent "spruceness." The masterpieces of the Prado have had their feelings respected. As an American artist once said to me, "they have enjoyed a long and beautiful neglect." Discretion and abstention were the watchwords of old Señor Madrazo, the

former director. He used to let me come into his studio to see Titian's great equestrian portrait of Charles V, which he had by him on an easel while it was undergoing some repairs to its back, and I never heard from him or from any of the Spanish artists with whom I used to foregather that "restoration" was a popular amusement in Madrid. Señor Villegas, the present director, uses the same prudence. He lets the pictures in the Prado alone. He is conservative, too, about their arrangement. I found that some paintings had changed their places, but in the main the grouping was much as I had known it so many years before.

There are modern painters who are prone to insist that Velasquez is the sole type of perfection in art. It is a false view to take, but it is the easiest thing in the world to understand how it has got into vogue. There is something about Velasquez which momentarily persuades you that nothing else in the history of painting quite matters, and I suppose it is the easier to surrender to this idea because the master is so simple, so straightforward in his way of taking you captive. The American artist I have just cited told me how his wife had gone for her first visit to the Prado, and after an hour or two with Velasquez had come back and tried to explain just how he had struck a mind making no pretence to artistic experience. "I think," she said, "it's the way he makes a leg look like a leg." That saying is

worth many a page of overwrought analysis. The late John La Farge, who knew the mysteries of painting if ever a man knew them, has a passage on "Las Meninas" in his "One Hundred Masterpieces" which shows the importance which he, too, gave to the painter's sheer truth. "Its workmanship and all that side of painting which copies nature for illusion," he says, "has reached here the highest level known; not attempting to deceive by special points of accuracy, but so that each accuracy depends upon the others and that the whole has that impression of nature which does not surprise us, which does not look clever or particularly wonderful or difficult to understand." That is one reason why you are tempted to accept unquestioned his pre-eminence, his isolation. These tremendous works of his seem such entirely natural affairs, to have been produced with so artless a gesture, in a manner so effortless and so magnificently right. To doubt the eternal efficacy of the hypothesis on which Velasquez labored seems like doubting the multiplication table. If two and two make four then this man's way of painting is the whole art of painting. It is with a kind of wrench that you have to remind yourself that "there are other dreams."

But what a very different thing from all the mathematical certainties of the academies is the method of Velasquez! In his early period, the period of the *bodegones*, those interiors in which he portrayed the humbler folk of Seville, you can track his genius

through what may be adequately enough described as clear and steady drawing, smooth brushwork, pure color, and an obviously artificial play of light and shade. But when Velasquez comes to maturity, and, to use Whistler's happy phrase, dips his brush in light and air, you lose the last clew to his magic. And all the time he seems to be reminding you, in his calm, half-disdainful way, that he is using no magic at all, that these glorious achievements of his are based upon the simplest possible craft, that the magic, if it is there, is all in the day's work. It is hopeless to interrogate him, yet in another way it is very much worth while to go over his canvases inch by inch. As you look the marvel grows. The paint is dashed on from a fluid brush in a quick, stenographic sort of way, a touch here and a touch there, in suggestion rather than literal notation. That much any eye can gather. But what are you to say of the synthetic vision determining the exact relation of each one of those touches to the others? What are you to say of the creative power which takes all this stuff of form and color, light and air, and fuses it into a living whole of beauty? I have gone day after day, for weeks on end, to the paintings of Velasquez and tried to dissect their technical traits. There are masters of infinitely more subtle characteristics who make a task of the sort nothing like so obscure. [And life, in his case, is always creeping in to make the search more difficult.] I used to study the marvellous

"Innocent X" at Rome, and oscillate between two totally different hypotheses as to the manner in which the paint had been laid on. While I balanced the two the eyes of the old Pope would take hold of me, and I would forget the spell of art for that of humanity. It is so in that miraculous room in the Prado. You are always turning from Velasquez to the men and women he painted, to the leg that looks like a leg.

It is there, I think, that he allies himself with the greatest of the great painters, and it is there, too, that he rebukes the narrow-mindedness of those very disciples of his who in our modern times would turn the sentient, breathing world into an affair of "still life" and make a dexterous turn of the brush the end and aim of art. If there is one thing more than another which Velasquez makes you feel it is that he was passionately interested in the substance of his art. His portraits were not achieved through mere sleight of hand. There is thought in them and there is, above all, a profound sympathy. Those were wise words of La Farge's about the workmanship "which does not look clever or particularly wonderful or difficult to understand." It is just the kind of workmanship to subject itself to a high purpose, to serve as a means of expression. And you soon enough discover, by the same token, that Velasquez is not, after all, "the whole show." Momentarily, I repeat, you are inclined to think he is. Never shall I forget the shock that it was to come to the Prado after several

summers in Italian galleries. For a little while I saw the whole Renaissance awry, with only Velasquez playing the technical game as it ought to be played. But these misapprehensions have a way of righting themselves. One learns, and nowhere better than at the feet of Velasquez, that the painter cannot live by technique alone; and it is but a step from this fundamental truth to the one making it clear that there are all kinds of technique, all kinds of genius. The Prado peculiarly enforces that point, for although Velasquez holds the centre of the stage he is surrounded by Titian, Veronese, Rubens, Van Dyke, Moro, the early Netherlandish painters and divers other masters, all at their best. Nothing could be more profitable than to turn from him to them, for to do so is to be reminded of some of the other things that count in art, things of imagination, of drama, of religion, that Velasquez knew nothing about.

Coming back to him with these convictions, I wondered what the result would be, how he would look after all those years, and especially what his relation to the other "kinds" would be. What surprised me was to find that there were no surprises, that I could not see him differently, that I missed nothing and that nothing had been added, save, for me, a deeper sense of his serene and limpid truth. There were no depths which had become clearer, there were no mysteries, there was just the candid, perfect painter, flinging no dust in one's eyes, but doing his work

like a gentleman. Of one thing I am sure: He is one of the greatest tonic forces in painting. To go back to him is to go back to an invigorating spring.

III

There is so much else to go back to in the Prado, but I have no intention of rehearsing an old story. It would be tempting to make a dozen excursions through the galleries—to talk, for example, about a picture like the wonderful little landscape by Goya which hangs near the entrance, a glittering view of the river, with multitudes of people in the foreground and the walls of Madrid beyond. The story of Goya's art is half untold without the introduction of a delicate, blond landscape like this. But there is only one painter after Velasquez of whom I would speak in any detail and that is Mazo, his pupil. Mazo is the man to whom the late Aureliano de Beruete, the great authority on Velasquez, thought it necessary to give a considerable number of paintings that had previously been counted among the authentic works of the master. The Spanish critic made good most of his attributions, but there were one or two which were always hard to accept. The "Admiral Pulido Pareja," of the National Gallery, and the "Lady with a Mantilla," which the Duke of Devonshire lent to the famous exhibition at the Guildhall in 1901, were long unchallenged as the works of Velasquez.

Beruete preferred to give them both to Mazo, and his son, in his valuable book on "The School of Madrid," takes the same view. That neither picture illustrates the master's art in its finest estate may readily be admitted. But for my own part I cling to both portraits, and to the "Lady with a Mantilla" even more than to the other.

It seemed interesting on revisiting the Prado to overhaul Mazo with particular care, as I had overhauled him elsewhere, and to see if I could what it was that justified the critic's appraisal of him at so high a value. The man who was clever enough for a quantity of his paintings to be taken for works by Velasquez must certainly have been diabolically clever. For the life of me I could not see that the Mazos in the Prado lent any aid to Beruete's contention. He figures there, it is true, chiefly as a landscapist, and in the upper room where a number of his scenes are gathered together he makes a decidedly good impression. But come to him fresh from Velasquez, go to and fro between the two day after day, and you are driven to the conclusion that the painter of the landscapes never had it in him to paint the "Admiral" or that adorable "Lady with the Mantilla." If Velasquez did not paint them then they were done by some one worthier of him than Mazo. There is a famous "View of Saragossa" in the Prado, in which the town and the river were painted by the pupil, while Velasquez did the figures in the foreground.

You have only to weigh the two parts of the picture, one against the other, to see the gulf dividing the men who made them. It is all in the touch, the indescribable, autographic, vitalizing touch. It is easier, it seems to me, to believe that Velasquez sometimes nodded and produced a painting below his average than to believe every such painting to be necessarily by Mazo. Even the second-best of the master was too good for the man.

III

VELASQUEZ AT THE HISPANIC MUSEUM

There is a miniature Prado in New York. It is called the Hispanic Museum. The compact little building of that institution was overrun by thousands of visitors during the special exhibitions made there of the works of Sorolla and Zuloaga; but then everything else was necessarily hidden away. I dare say that comparatively few people in the city are aware of the extraordinary collection of Spanish pictures which is hung in the upper gallery, when this museum is given over to its regular functions, to the still air of delightful studies. The place is full of precious books and manuscripts, of magnificent pieces of old Hispano-Moresque pottery, of objects in wrought metal, and other souvenirs of a great historic past. Forming a kind of crown to the whole

is the collection of pictures ranging from the Primitives down to Goya, and including valuable examples of Murillo, El Greco and other masters, not forgetting Moro's superb portrait of the Duke of Alba. Set like jewels in the mass are three portraits by Velasquez, and, as at Madrid, they dominate their surroundings. That is why I call the Hispanic Museum a miniature Prado.

The chief of these three paintings is the famous full-length of the Count-Duke of Olivares, which was formerly at Dorchester House, in London, the property of Major Holford. It was purchased, it is said, for an "almost fabulous sum," by Mrs. C. P. Huntington, and presented by her to the Hispanic Museum in memory of her husband. It is the most revealing of the portraits painted by Velasquez of King Philip's ill-omened minister. The equestrian portrait at Madrid, painted at a later date and perhaps more generally known, is technically a glorious thing, but, as Beruete says, "the personage represented was never under fire," and as a study of character this is accordingly, if not precisely disingenuous, at all events a work more courtly than exact. The early full-length prefigures something of that psychological penetration which you observe, for example, in the wonderful "Don Diego del Corral y Arellano," which in certain traits it resembles. Olivares in this canvas is not quite so much "on parade" as in the equestrian portrait, and though Velasquez does not catch him

absolutely unmasked he certainly seems to have found him in more of his characteristic mood. The sleek nature of the man is mercilessly disclosed.

In the pages of the late Martin Hume, better, perhaps, than anywhere else, the reader may trace the true character of this courtier, so cruelly inimical to the interests of his master. Like many obstinate people, Philip could be craftily led, and Olivares was the last statesman in the world to have had the post of authority at Philip's vacillating elbow. Statesmanship, indeed, of any serious calibre, he plentifully lacked. His cue was deftly to play on the least creditable impulses of the King, to minister to his levities, and, in a word, to bemuse Philip out of any proper sense of what really needed to be done for the welfare of his dominions. Even if Major Hume had not given us chapter and verse for this hypothesis, and if no other historians had touched upon the baseness of Olivares, could it not all be divined from this marvellous portrait? It is marvellous not only as it mirrors a sinister personality, but as it illustrates the habit of a great painter, not yet risen to his full stature, but already the unmistakable possessor of genius. There is genius in the simple and solid placing of the figure, and then you see it everywhere manifested, in the beautiful modelling of the head and hands, in the definition of the draperies — so fluid and yet so precise — and in the perfect sobriety, the pure glow, the incomparable distinction,

of the tone. The color scheme, dark almost to blackness in the dress of the count-duke, but given a greater warmth and sonority in the red cloth that covers the table, makes what might fairly be described as a massive chord, but Velasquez, be he never so forceful, is at the same moment exquisitely suave. In his leading masses of color, as in the neutral background, he is the master of pure transparent tone, so fine, so softly luminous, that while you are seized by the strength of the portrait you are gently beguiled by its sheer charm. To see the master at full length the student must go to Spain, but if that is not possible he may find ample consolation in New York. In this portrait he may draw near to the secret of Velasquez and drink deep of the beauty of his work.

Moreover, it is not in the "Olivares" alone that he may find these sensations of pleasure and this instruction. Near at hand hang two smaller portraits, neither of them of equal "importance," as that word is employed in the jargon of the day, but both brilliantly characteristic examples. One is the portrait supposed to be of that Cardinal Pamphili who, Beruete tells us, on the authority of M. Niccolle, resigned his high state in the Church in order to marry. It is more freely painted than the "Olivares," and the reds, based on a higher key than those in the latter portrait, have a rosier, sweeter glow. The loose but eloquent brushwork would by itself declare the authenticity of the piece. The last member of the trio

is a bewitching "Portrait of a Girl," which I recall seeing in the memorable exhibition at the Guildhall some ten or twelve years ago, and have never been able to forget, its fragrant character is so clearly proclaimed. Velasquez never painted a more delicately haunting type than this little flower of Spanish childhood. Beruete has this interesting note on the probable sitter:

> The model is not one of the princesses of the House of Austria, who are of such a different type; on the other hand, one cannot help noticing its resemblance to some of the grandchildren of Velasquez to be seen in the picture at Vienna, "The Family of Mazo," which leads me to believe that the child is probably the same as the one depicted standing in this picture, who appears to be between fourteen and sixteen years of age. If, therefore, this is the case, the date of the work would be about 1642 to 1643, at which time the eldest daughter of Mazo and Francisca Velasquez would be about seven or eight years old, which is the age at which she is represented. If we take into account the characteristics and technique of the work, this is the date at which this picture was painted.

The scholarly critic's supposition is further borne out by the inner significance of the portrait. It is indubitably the memorial of a domestic sentiment, the unaffected portrait of a merely human type. When Velasquez painted a young Infanta of Spain he performed prodigies of art, and on a fall of lace over rose-colored silk, for example, would wreak such technical magic as holds the connoisseur of mere painting to this day enchanted. But the face of his

little princess, set in the mould of Spanish court etiquette, probably the most rigid formula ever known in the history of manners, would somehow approximate to the chill immobility of a waxen doll. The child in this portrait is an individuality, an artless, happy little girl, known intimately and loved. Through the ennobling touch of the master's brush she bears herself composedly and bravely in the company of his wily courtier and his very mundane churchman. The three portraits together make an invaluable boon for the lover and student of Velasquez. Decidedly, the searcher after artistic inspiration will henceforth count the Hispanic Museum among the shrines of great paintings.

IV

THE ROKEBY VENUS

Doubts vainly cast upon the authenticity of a great picture ordinarily receive at the hands of the historian no more consideration than is implied in the scant courtesy of a brief footnote. Yet there are occasions on which it seems legitimate to record at greater length some particularly salient instance of critical error. It is perhaps worth while to set down here the remarkable case of Mr. James Greig and the "Venus with the Mirror," better known as the Rokeby Venus. It was in the early summer of 1910

that cable despatches from London reported how Mr. Greig, the art critic of *The Morning Post*, had attempted circumstantially to deprive Velasquez of the credit of having painted the renowned nude in the National Gallery. Twice previously he had demonstrated his acuteness in penetrating to the source of an old picture. Upon a painting ascribed to Rembrandt in one of the winter exhibitions at Burlington House he had discovered the signature of Ferdinand Bol, and he had shown that a work in the Salting Collection, given to Pieter de Hoogh, was really signed by Samuel van Hoogstraeten. Since these disclosures of his had been accepted as conclusive it was not unnatural to pay him some attention when he advanced the hypothesis that the "Venus," long believed to be by Velasquez, bore the cipher of Juan Bautista Del Mazo, the son-in-law of the court painter of Philip IV. His claim was that he had found in the lower left-hand corner of the picture, about twelve inches under the left foot of the reclining figure, a signature which, as he reproduced it in *The Morning Post*, clearly revealed only a "B" and an "M." The cipher suggested rather than actually exhibited the full initials of Mazo. Against this claim Sir Charles Holroyd, the director of the National Gallery (himself an artist), set the fact that after taking off the glass he had obtained a certificate from eight experts that there was no signature visible. Nevertheless the affair made a prodigious sensation,

promoting floods of argument in the press everywhere, and so it seems, as I have said, interesting to return to the subject and to examine into the history and character of the picture.

It is related by Beruete to the period following the second of the painter's two Italian journeys, the period of the "Mercury and Argos," the "Mars," and several other mythological subjects produced toward the end of his career. These included a "Psyche and Cupid," an "Apollo and Marsyas" and a "Venus and Adonis," which adorned the Hall of Mirrors in the Alcazar at Madrid and were destroyed by fire in 1734. Traversing the history of the "Venus with the Mirror," Beruete says:

> The first mention made of it is by Don Antonio Ponz in his "Viaje de Espana," published in 1776, wherein he describes the paintings in the house of the Duke of Alba. Don Pedro de Madrazo in an article published in the "Ilustracion Española y Americana," 8th November, 1874, presumes that "Venus with the Mirror" is none other than "Psiquis y Cupido," which appears in the inventory of the year 1686 of the Royal Alcazar, and adds that, owing to the fire in the Alcazar in 1734, it must have been removed to the house of the Duke of Alba. Professor Justi, and Curtis, in agreement with Madrazo, ascribed the same origin to the picture which I admitted as being correct in the French edition of my book.
>
> Recently I have been able to determine the true origin, and clear up the confusion existing between this picture and that of "Psiquis y Cupido," the subject and measurement of which are different from those of the "Venus with the Mirror." The latter figures in the inventories of

the collections of Don Gaspar Mendez de Haro, son of the famous Don Luis Mendez de Haro, Marquis of Carpio and Heliche, minister and favorite of Philip IV from the time of the fall of his uncle, the Conde-Duque de Olivares in 1643. The inventories were made, one in Rome in 1682, and another in Naples in 1688. In these inventories there appears the picture of the "Venus" mentioned in the following terms, "A life-size Venus, reclining nude and a child holding a mirror in which she sees herself. The picture of the Venus is an original of Don Diego Velasquez." The picture of the Venus therefore did not belong to the Alcazar Palace as Madrazo thought but to the Mendez de Haro family.

By the marriage of Dona Catalina de Haro y Guzman, daughter of Don Gaspar, with the Duke of Alba, in 1688, the property of the Haro family reverted to the House of Alba, and with it the picture of the Venus of Velasquez. In 1802, at the death of the renowned Duchess of Alba, whose portrait was so often painted by Goya, at the court of Charles IV, by testamentary disposition of this lady part of her property was bequeathed to personal friends, who were therefore not her legitimate heirs. This brought about a lawsuit at the instance of the successor to the title and estate of the House of Alba, who was the Duke of Berwick, Liria, and Jerica, and during the lawsuit the King, Charles IV, issued an order that the three pictures in question should be sold to his prime minister and favorite Don Manuel Godoy, Principe de la Paz. These three pictures were "The Madonna of the House of Alba," by Raphael, "The School of Love," by Correggio, and the "Venus with the Mirror."

After the fall of the Principe de la Paz in 1808, the Venus was sold to Mr. Wallis, the agent of the well-known dealer in pictures, Mr. Buchanan, in 1813, and on the advice of Sir Thomas Lawrence it was bought from Mr. Buchanan by Mr. Morritt for £500. From that time up till October, 1905, this picture has held the place of

honor in Rokeby Park [the home of Mr. Morritt], with the exception of the two occasions on which it has been exhibited to the public, in 1857, and in Burlington House in 1890 at the exhibition of Old Masters.

The rest of the story is briefly told. A few years ago it was "in the air" that the picture might be bought, and the present writer, by the way, so far succeeded in interesting one buyer in the subject, that he promised to go down to Rokeby Park and see if he could not obtain it for the American market. A few months later, in 1906, came the news that it had been sold under an order of the Court of Chancery for £30,500, and that the purchasers were the dealers, T. Agnew & Sons. They exhibited it for a couple of months, and there was much excitement over the chance of its passing to America. Thereupon the National Arts Collection Fund raised the sum of £45,000 and presented it to the nation. The episode had its obscure side. Some observers wondered why the price had soared so high, and one of them, Mr. Edmund Gosse, wrote to the press as follows:

A very large sum has changed hands over the Rokeby Venus and we have no statement of the name or the intention of the person or persons who made this payment necessary, nor of any other facts regarding the early history of the transaction. I ask for an exact historical account of the offer and the obtaining of the Rokeby Venus with all the names and all the dates and all the payments.

Mr. Gosse never got what he wanted, though it is said that there was "a confidential statement to the Committee of the National Arts Collection Fund which appears to have satisfied that body." Meanwhile, the authenticity of the picture had not gone unchallenged, though it should be added that close watch upon the fortunes of this canvas was not rewarded by any public revelations carrying any particular weight. *The Morning Post*, which was of course keen upon backing up its critic, editorially observed that "a number of men eminent in art and letters always cast doubts on the æsthetic and monetary value of the picture," but when it went on to give names all it could say was that "among these may be mentioned Sir William Richmond, Mr. Edmund Gosse, and Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower." The trio is not precisely imposing. Sir William Richmond is the artist whose decorations in St. Paul's aroused a storm of protest, and I know nothing in his work as a painter or in his record otherwise to justify the assumption that he has esoteric insight into the art of Velasquez. In a recent lecture he informed the students of the Royal Academy that there were two pigments used in the painting of the Venus which were not in existence in the time of Velasquez. Whatever the force of this argument may be it scarcely bolsters up the idea that the picture was painted by Velasquez's son-in-law, unless we are to assume that the latter was privately inventing new colors. As

for Mr. Edmund Gosse, he has, so far as I can see, no standing whatever in a court adjudicating an artistic case. His suspicions as to the sale do not signify that he is an expert on Velasquez. Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower has written some interesting artistic biographies, but neither in these nor in the work of sculpture which he erected in Stratford has he suggested that he is possessed of rare powers of artistic divination.

I would not, however, lay undue stress upon the character of Mr. Greig's witnesses — though it is a fair point — because it is, in the circumstances, of no great consequence. As regards the documentary evidence adduced by Beruete it seems to me convincing, but in any case we should turn with confidence to the picture itself. It is not, I fear, what it once was. In the process of cleaning it has lost something of its bloom, and, in fact, it is impossible not to feel fairly indignant over the scrubbing it would appear to have received. But not even the scrubbing could rob it of its essential charm, the essential charm of Velasquez. Beruete aptly notes that it is painted in exactly the same tones as the "Mercury and Argus" and the "Mars," and he finds in it also a certain preponderance of purple tones allying it to the master's "Coronation of the Virgin." He goes on to describe it as one of the principal works of Velasquez, one of the most important by him outside the Prado — and he might have added that it is one of those in which you most

subtly and most quickly feel the indefinable magic of his touch. The flesh painting is superb and particularly well illustrates the strong purity of the master, that quality in tone and in brushwork which does so much to give him his place apart. Even if the initials cited by Mr. Greig had been demonstrated to exist — and the manner in which they revealed themselves to some observers and not to others imported an element of humor into the situation — it would still have been left to the doubting critics really to make good their case. If Velasquez did not paint this exquisite picture then it must have been executed by another master of the same name.

V

EL GRECO AND GOYA

El Greco is one of the painters who have lived by ideas. The melodramatic aspect of much of his work has obscured this fact. Criticism has been baffled by the eccentric elongation of form which generally marks his treatment of the figure, by his strange and even sinister traits as a colorist, and by his sometimes unduly forced effects of light and shade. The impression he conveys, as of a genius lying in a sort of penumbra, outside the traditional lines of development in European painting, has been happily summarized by a clever English artist and writer, Charles

Ricketts. The works of El Greco, he has said, look as if they had been painted by torchlight in a dungeon of the Inquisition. The saying is perfect save for the implication it carries of an atmosphere harsh and cruel. M. Barres takes us nearer to the painter's secret in his ingenious hypothesis making El Greco simply the predestined interpreter of the spirit of Toledo. A mystic in the last, subtlest ingredients of his being, he threw in his fortunes with a centre of mysticism when he made the old cathedral town the scene of his labors. Man of the world though he was, and vividly alive to all things touching the eye and the mind, his genius as an artist was still in harmony with the sentiment of the church. This view of the matter may not be conclusive, but at all events it affords a profitable clew, inasmuch as it directs attention to El Greco's more spiritual qualities.

The connoisseur of technic will linger appreciatively over his portraits, but if he is wise he will go on to consider not only the powerful execution but the sympathy with which El Greco painted the princes and minor servants of the church, and a host of laymen too. In his studies of character, no less than in his religious subjects, and in pictures like the famous "Burial of Count Orgaz," where devout ecstasy and the realistic traits of secular portraiture are commingled, there is something mysteriously poignant, a sombre emotion, a point of view which is not that of a painter merely, but of a man sunk in half-pain-

ful revery. His amazing "View of Toledo," almost the sole souvenir of his interest in landscape, is remarkable for much more than its dramatic sky, its intense "picturesqueness." What chiefly impresses us is its character as a spiritual record. The theatricality of the piece is due to no misreading of nature, but to the fact that the scene has been observed with some indefinable "inner vision." Was that vision notably inspired? Do we owe to its operation pictures of extraordinary moment? Despite the fervor with which El Greco is appraised in some quarters, one may be permitted to doubt. The recent craze for the old masters has promoted varied developments. When the dealers, ransacking Europe anew, turned their attention to Spain, El Greco came in for an astonishing and not altogether rationalized popularity. His present rather esoteric vogue is not necessarily going to last. When the dithyrambic cease from troubling and the scoffers are at rest, appreciation of El Greco will probably be found somewhere between acceptance of him as a great master and rejection of him as a morbid eccentric.

The contrast between El Greco and Goya is profound. One used in his pictures a light that never was on land or sea. The other used the familiar light of the world in which he lived. The genuineness of El Greco's mysticism we cannot question, however we may speculate as to its ultimate value. Goya's religious emotion, when he brought it into

play, was not precisely insincere, but it certainly had no depth, no real force. He too, like El Greco, lived by ideas, but they were the ideas of a satirist, and an ineffably worldly-wise satirist at that. His art is saturated in intelligence. It is as modern in feeling as it is in technique. All his sitters were "subjects." That is why his work has such tremendous vitality. It interested him to the point of passion. Style in art is of personality all compact. You can read a man's character in the play of his brush. Goya's history is writ plain across the surfaces of his portraits.

He was an eager, militant creature. The period of social decadence in which he lived enraged but could not disgust or depress him. He looked upon the vicious court with a scorn he would not pretend to disguise, but he painted it with delight and gratitude. For a man of his moods and sardonic, inquiring mind what could have been more welcome than such a mass of raw material? And besides the bad and the weak there were so many figures in Goya's Spain that were, on the surface, merely beautiful. Look at one of his portraits of the great court ladies of his time and observe the delicacy with which the painter caresses an exquisite motive. Watch him as he renders the elusive charm of texture in a fashionable dress or gives himself up to the sensuous grace of "The Famous Bookseller of the Calle de las Carretas." Beauty of form and of color, the magic of light, the dramatic

significance of movement — these things find in him truly "the devouring eye" and a hand itching to translate the thing seen into terms of paint. Goya is of his time, of course, and his portraits are Spanish to the core. His faculty for blending the ease of every-day actuality with a certain stiffness attributable to courtly modes carries us straight back to eighteenth-century Madrid. But in their ruthless psychology and in their peculiar technical brilliancy, which is wreaked upon human nature as in a fury of artistic passion, his portraits might have been painted yesterday.

VI

FOUR MODERN SPANIARDS

I

FORTUNY

Was Fortuny a man of genius, and, if so, in what does his genius consist? There are commentators who barely admit that he had more than a cheap talent. I have heard an artist, himself possessed of at least a streak of genius, disparaging the young Spaniard, untimely lost, as though he had a personal and somewhat mean little grudge to satisfy. Well, I know that Fortuny's vogue is not what it once was, but neither is it plain that he is on the way to be forgotten. The genius, I think, is there. It consists

in impeccable draughtsmanship, dazzling color, and abounding sunlight, all fused with the rapidity and sureness of instinct into works of brilliantly original style. The Impressionists might protest that Fortuny had no atmosphere, and it is true that his outdoor work lacks the subtle vibrations which the Barbizon men first introduced into their pictures and which the Impressionists have since made the chief object of their study. But Fortuny's landscape is nevertheless true, his light and air are unmistakably drawn from an intimate acquaintance with nature, and though he is pre-eminently a magician of nineteenth-century painting, pre-eminently a master who gets out of the palette such coruscating effects as we look for in the art of a musical virtuoso, he is one of the most accurate and one of the most human painters of his time.

Somewhere in his correspondence Henri Regnault speaks of Fortuny's having robbed him of his sleep through the tremendous effect of his art. It is easy to understand how the young Frenchman must have been overwhelmed. Coming from Paris, where academic precept has always held such sway, he must have felt that as a matter of course good drawing was the product of study as well as of genius. In Fortuny he saw it spring on the canvas as though by legerdemain. Fortuny studied, studied all his life long, and in a number of sketch-books which his widow still possesses in her palace in Venice there

are pages and pages of drawings which reveal the most ardent search after the last details of structural truth. The painter never wearied of verifying his impressions. He labored with well-nigh as much assiduity as Meissonier showed, and that is saying much. But he never fell into Meissonier's rigid methods of drawing. On the contrary he went on handling his brush and pencil and etching-needle with the freedom and dexterity of one for whom difficulties did not exist.

It is surprising to find how soon he arrived at this freedom. Born at Reus, in Catalonia, in June, 1838, his modest circumstances kept him for a while unable to pursue his artistic studies to advantage. And when, in his teens, he labored at the Barcelona Academy, he won the Prix de Rome without doing anything that clearly foreshadowed the triumphs of his manhood. When I took a long journey to look up the memorials of that early time I was somewhat disappointed by the little collection preserved at Barcelona. But in 1859, when General Prim was carrying on military operations in Morocco, the young painter was sent to the front to make studies of the campaign. He made them. Ultimately, after vexatious delays and negotiations too complicated to be touched upon at length in this place, he produced "The Battle of Tetuan," a large canvas which may be seen in the Barcelona museum. It is an interesting picture, and shows that the artist had found

his style. But still more eloquent are the small studies made by Fortuny at this time. If he had felt the witchery of the sun in Spain he had not yet carried it into his art. Arriving in Morocco the sun took him captive forever, and the bizarre character of the landscape and people settled the direction of his genius. From that epoch he became the Fortuny that we know. A few years later he was in Paris: then he visited Madrid and married Señorita Madrazo, daughter of the director of the Prado; and in a little while he proceeded to Rome, living there until his death in 1874. Neither in Paris nor Spain nor Italy did he let go of the Moorish inspiration. That had saturated his nature, and his entire work shows him the master of those exquisite effects of color and light which he first saw on the campaign with General Prim. Even in such pictures as "The Spanish Marriage" or "The Academicians of Saint Luke Choosing a Model," which are far removed in their fastidious elegance from the blaze and brilliancy of Moorish scenes, he is true to the old point of departure. The sparkle which belongs to his sketches of Tangiers still plays about his drawing-room scenes and his studies of rococo figures, furniture, costume and manners.

His critics have sometimes averred that it was all a matter of trickery, a skilful application of the pyrotechnical ingenuities of Goya, whom he had certainly studied with much devotion. But one way of proving the fallacy of this judgment is to compare

Fortuny with any of his numerous followers, especially in Paris, Madrid and Rome. His methods become trickery and jugglery in lesser hands. With him they were the spontaneous and artless expression of his nature. Hence his paintings glitter without being artificial, they are like jewelled canvases, but they are never hard or mechanical. Furthermore, they have, for all their daintiness and fragile charm, a peculiar strength and even dignity of composition. Few cautious and thoughtful Academicians have had a finer gift for filling a canvas than Fortuny possessed. The great picture of "The Academicians of Saint Luke Choosing a Model" is one proof of this, "The Spanish Marriage" is another; but, indeed, Fortuny's smallest and most casual sketch was apt to have this balance and this beauty of proportion. I recall the arrangement of the accessories in a little sketch of the artist's daughter, the relation of the white table to the dark background and the just proportions of the two contrasting spaces. Instinctively Fortuny put his figures in the right part of the canvas or paper, instinctively he introduced or omitted just the things that would make or mar his design, and if "The Academicians of Saint Luke Choosing a Model" and "The Spanish Marriage" are more remarkable in one way than another it is in their illustration of sumptuousness combined with perfect simplicity of design. There is a water-color of Fortuny's which represents a Kabyle chief stand-

ing on a prayer-rug in a mosque in Tangiers, his picturesque figure set boldly against a massive white pillar. In the background the broad walls of the mosque, with their bands of arabesques, are drawn with great breadth and force. It is just such a composition as would reduce most artists to despair, the materials are so hopelessly simple. Fortuny keeps each detail in exactly the right relation to the next and makes a symmetrical picture where it would have seemed impossible to make more than an ephemeral sketch.

There is nothing ephemeral about his work. Gay as it is, light-hearted and vivacious as is the sentiment which runs through it, there is still a remarkable solidity about this master's art. Whatever he did he did so well, whatever vein he cultivated he forced to yield such beautiful and original results, that the one law of experience which promises to harm him is really suspended in his honor. He glitters, and the artist who glitters is almost invariably tiring. But Fortuny does not tire.

II

SOROLLA

A long time ago, in Madrid, the painters and sculptors I met there were unanimous on the question of what one of their fellow-artists would ultimately do

to astonish the world. They maintained that Joaquin Sorolla, a painter then still in his young manhood, was going sooner or later to revolutionize the school to which they belonged and to win European fame. At first it was a little difficult to understand this enthusiasm. A picture by him, much in favor at the time, the one called "Another Marguerite" (which is now, by the way, preserved in St. Louis), made its impression rather through its pathos than through any special qualities of technique. Later, certain open-air studies of his provided an explanation of the emotion of his friends. They showed that he was achieving remarkable mastery over effects of light and air, and that he was developing also great adroitness as a draughtsman. Since then Sorolla's progress has been phenomenal, and I was interested to observe, at the large exhibition which he opened in the Georges Petit gallery, in Paris, several years ago, that he had more than fulfilled old expectations. This exhibition was repeated at the Grafton galleries, in London, and more recently, early in 1909, the artist made a similar appearance in New York. Three hundred and fifty of his paintings and studies were hung in the building of the Hispanic Society of America.

Sorolla's significance as a figure in modern Spanish art is the better appreciated if the student considers the traits of his more salient predecessors. With the death of Goya, in 1828, Spain bade farewell to an

artistic vitality which, in fact, he alone had kept going for a long period. Even Goya had but fitfully revived gleams of that sacred fire which had burned with so steady a glow in the art of Velasquez, and it is especially important to note that he founded no school. The Spaniards following him were, to tell the truth, a rather mediocre company, painting in dull, academic fashion. The first man of consequence to rise amongst them was Mariano Fortuny. He was a type of what is familiarly known as diabolical cleverness. He manipulated his pigments with the skill of a conjurer taking a rabbit out of a hat. But, as I have already shown, he was not a mere producer of jeweller's work, of *bric-a-brac* in paint. Unfortunately, it was his sleight-of-hand that appealed to the men who gathered around him in Rome, and that they made popular there and in Spain. A vast quantity of Spanish art was presently all aglitter. To the credit of some of its makers, be it said, they had talents strong enough to triumph over the besetting temptation. Pradilla, for example, was quick to perceive that man cannot live by *bric-a-brac* alone, and his individuality pushed its way through the web of filigree and sparkle which Fortuny had made so bewitching. Yet Pradilla remained a sharer in his clever countryman's love of detail, of picturesque costume and so on, and this predilection caught any number of other Spaniards in its net. Villegas is perhaps the most conspicuous of these, but a long

list might be made of men who were bound to give to any miscellaneous exhibition of Spanish art a general air of artificial light used to bring out the sheen of rich stuffs and metals, of pictures worked up in the studio rather than based upon frank contact with nature. A man of genius, following a legitimate inspiration, might turn this motive of technical legerdemain to good purpose, as the late Daniel Vierge did in the formation of his brilliant style as a pen draughtsman, but in the field of painting it was certain to be superseded. Sorolla has done more than any other Spaniard of his time to put it in its proper place.

There are other revolutionists in the school, and one or two of them, like Zuloaga and Anglada, have won high repute, but neither of these painters produces work that is, as the saying goes, "of the centre." They see nature as through a very arbitrarily fabricated veil. Anglada blends the note of the Salon with that of Goya and leaves an impression of meretricious artifice. Zuloaga is a master of the *tour de force;* and though that need not necessarily spell anything undesirable, it means, in his case, work that somehow fails to carry conviction. Sorolla's strength lies in his genuineness. He does not follow either Fortuny or Velasquez. He faces nature and endeavors to put her truths upon canvas precisely as he sees them. "Endeavors" is, perhaps, hardly the word. If there is one thing more than another suggested by his work,

it is that he paints a picture as a man might write a note—setting down what he has to say with positively appalling fluency and aplomb. I remember a picture of his of a girl in white at Biarritz, a girl painted in full light. She was using a small photographic camera, and he called the picture "Instantanea." The legend might go with the mass of his work. His exhibition in Paris was much frequented by artists, and one of them, standing in amazement before a certain study of children running against the wind near the surf, paid a striking tribute to Sorolla's faculty for depicting action. "Listen," he said to me, this painter himself famous throughout Europe for an almost uncanny skill. "I have had years of experience in dealing with problems like these, and I don't know how he does it! I would have thought one needed a camera to get the truth in such shape as that."

It is not with light and air alone, with a broad swift vision of things, that he gains his success. It is with a decisive grasp upon form, and a power of drawing that sometimes leaves one breathless. He has been described, with overwrought zeal, as "apart from, and superior to, the modern French Impressionists." He is not superior to Manet, for example, or to Degas, for art, as the too fervid advocates should remember, embraces many qualities. It will be time to talk of Señor Sorolla's superiority when he has surpassed such masterpieces, say, as that portrait

of a lady in black, by Degas, which is one of the gems in Mrs. Gardner's collection in Boston and Fortuny's superb portrait in the same key in the Metropolitan Museum. Neither of these, by the way, it may be said in all courtesy, has he yet even approached. Probably Señor Sorolla himself would be quick to recognize the fact. But there are undoubtedly points of difference between this Spaniard and the Frenchman whose passion for the open air is likewise his own. His draughtsmanship is closer, he follows form with a simpler, more confident, and, above all, more flowing touch. The odd thing is that he charms, gives you the sense of a certain personal quality in his drawing, for all that his style might be roughly described as more photographic, more scientific, than artistic. I may cite his "Sea Idyll," a picture of a boy and a girl lying in wet sand with the water just touching their legs. The boy wears nothing save an old straw hat with a wide brim. The girl wears a bathing dress of some thin material, and this, saturated with water, clings to her body. It would be impossible to beat the sheer technical proficiency shown in this painting, and, as has been said, there is an odd savor of individuality, of style, to be apprehended, fused with the clever brushwork.

It is with such motives as the one here described that Sorolla is at his best. Over and over again he paints his young bathers, scampering along the sands, enfolded in the towel brought by a nurse, just plung-

ing into the waves, or, as in one beautiful example, "Swimmers," showing their lithe brown bodies in the very element itself and taking on therefrom a new beauty. His "Oxen Ready to Beach Fishing Boats, Valencia," the picture with well-filled white sails billowing above the boats and cattle, is known everywhere through reproductions. It admirably illustrates his bravura. It is a picture painted for the Salon that is, nevertheless, not wholly a "Salon picture." That is to say, Sorolla boldly arrests your attention, yet puts not a trace of sensationalism into his work. His drawing is as sound, his color is as well managed, his spirit is as sincere as when he is making one of his smaller studies or even painting one of his innumerable little snap-shots.

You would say, on observing the uniform authority of this painter, exerted alike in a great "show-piece" and in a casual note of movement and color, that his resources could never fail him; but it must be confessed that, with all his gifts, he still has certain clearly defined limitations. Let him work in a flood of sunlight and he is at his ease, but ask him to paint nature in one of her tenderer, more poetic aspects, and he is not so sure. His science does not forsake him. He paints his ground forms truthfully enough. But he brings no emotion to his task, no subtlety, and to note this fact in his landscape work is presently to note it elsewhere with even greater regret.

As a portrait-painter Sorolla is, one may be sure, a master of the likeness. You are impressed by the firmness with which he models a head, the nimbleness with which he passes swiftly over the features, and, above all, the vitality with which he invests his sitter. But while his grasp of form and his sense of character may be demonstrated in these heads, and while he may paint the bodies of his men and women with understanding, the want of sunlight seems to react upon his temperament and to make him cold, to deprive his style of most, if not all, of its *élan*. Furthermore, his portraits show, even more than his open-air pictures—and these are by no means devoid of significance in the matter—that while his color is true it never possesses a fine quality. About nothing that he paints does there hang the charm of beautiful surface. He uses his pigments not sensitively, not with a loving feeling for them, but with a kind of brutality. His pictures, especially when seen in large numbers, have an almost blinding effect. They do not beguile, they dazzle. They bring vividly into the foreground the fact that Sorolla is not an imaginative painter, not a man of dreams or of complex emotions. He is simply a marvellously equipped technician, born to paint human beings breathing and moving in a world of light and air. Though his works do not "wear well," having no creative inspiration in them, their immediate, momentary appeal is irresistible.

III

ZULOAGA

The exhibition at the Hispanic Museum of the works of Sorolla was followed by one of some thirty-five or forty paintings by his countryman, Ignacio Zuloaga. This artist, like the other, has made some stir in Paris and elsewhere, though he has not in his own land enjoyed quite the same popularity as Sorolla. The explanation is simple. The methods of Sorolla are of special importance to existing conditions in Spanish art. The example of his direct dealing with open-air subjects has been needed by the school to which he belongs. Zuloaga, a very different type, has no invigorating inspiration to transmit to contemporaries already predisposed to excessive artifice. He is himself of artifice all compact, one of those painters who retire to a world of their own, consulting Nature only in order to clothe her truths in a specious garment. The commotion aforesaid which he has produced is not, of course, to be cavalierly dismissed. A reputation like that of Zuloaga must rest upon some more or less substantial foundation. It would seem to have its basis in novelty or rather in the exploitation of old ideas by a piquant personality.

This painter derives, in substance, from Goya. He is interested in national types of a picturesque

or even grotesque order, and delineates them in somewhat sombre mood. The women in one of his pictures, "The Sorceresses of San Millan," are just such bleak old witches as Goya loved to draw. It is not the mere subject that hints at a sympathy between the modern painter and the eighteenth-century master. There are subtler points of identification, points of temperament. In his studies of familiar Spanish life Zuloaga also recalls the early *bodegones* of Velasquez, but there is really nothing in common between him and the great court painter. Velasquez had an instinct for beauty. Zuloaga would seem to have nothing of the sort. Velasquez was a supreme exemplar of style. Zuloaga is a mannerist if ever there was one. His manner, like everything else in his art, points to an external influence, suggests work done from without rather than produced out of true creative energy. He reproduces the accent of Manet, without its freshness and fire. His figures are painted in broad and heavy masses of flat color, not precisely opaque, but scarcely transparent. He is fond of the silhouette. Though his figures do not lack relief, but are, indeed, very solidly and even boldly modelled, they leave the impression of having been painted in outline and then filled in with color. The result is arresting. Few eclectics are so successful as Zuloaga has been in fusing diverse influences and adding a suggestion of individuality. You feel that he has looked sympathetically

at the old Spanish painters, interested himself in the types of the Spanish countryside or the bull-ring, taken a leaf out of the book of French Impressionism, and then set himself down in the studio to work it all up into an effective picture for the Salon. There he would be bound to attract attention, but it is difficult to see how criticism could have ignored the uninspired character of his work and its very grave specific defects.

His surfaces are cold and inert. They are, in fact, positively claylike. It is almost incredible that a painter so clever should deal in tones so hard and lifeless. Nowhere in his work is anything like elasticity to be discerned. His leathery, unmodulated color is matched by his dogged, nerveless craftsmanship. Of the documentary value of some of his paintings there can be no question. He is a faithful illustrator. There are paintings by Zuloaga which vividly revive memories of stony Spanish hill-towns, bathed in cold, crystal-clear light. They are very Spanish, and so is he—racy, without nuance, absolutely tangible. The direct statement characteristic of this painter is as forcible, as uncompromising, as the heavy mass of a Spanish wall, and pigment as it is used in his mode of expression has something of the same density. Why is it, I wonder, that the latter-day Spanish painter, like Zuloaga or Sorolla, seemingly makes no effort to study that pure beauty of surface which meant so much to the Velasquez

whom doubtless they adore? Their color may be never so brilliant, and yet it is without quality and very nearly opaque. The best of Zuloaga's pictures is never anything more than a *tour de force*, as sharply vivid in its definition of form as a merely honest, in no wise "touched-up" photograph might be, and with every note of color in it given its full value. This color, too, is kept well together, and it tells effectively against a somewhat factitious but still very skilfully painted background. The figure is full of life, and in the strongly modelled head and face, brimming over with character, the artist provides just the right climax to his vitalized, pictorial motive. Only a powerful and original craftsman could do this thing. What is it, then, that disturbs our impression?

The excess of detail in the painting of the costume, the forced simplicity of the background, which too obviously, too trickily, throws out the figure; the savor of studio pose which underlies the indubitable reality of the piece;—all these things might conceivably fall into subordination to the artist's main purpose and even appear negligible if it were not for one cardinal limitation. This is Zuloaga's blunt indifference to the genius of his medium. I have called his color brilliant, but it is a hot and heavy brilliance. His drawing, though not precisely turgid, is unquestionably wanting in ease, and, by the same token, in distinction. He is an able painter, and yet the con-

viction will not down that he paints, so to say, by main strength. His work is full of interest and it has not an atom of charm. Zuloaga is one of those painters who excite in us a kind of wistful revery. We speculate as to what achievements might have been theirs if only their gifts had been a little better balanced. We look at a picture by him, so well composed, so masterfully done, and wish that the composition had been a little more artlessly framed, that he had got into it something of the spontaneity of life instead of the immobility of a good tableau. We wish for more atmosphere, for tones more subtly broken; in a word, for less of brute force and more of creative mystery. He can paint a boldly assertive portrait, working on the surface. He cannot paint the soul of things, for amongst all his rich resources we find neither imagination nor taste.

IV

VIERGE

I

Paris paid a handsome tribute to the memory of Daniel Vierge in the late winter of 1912. I saw then, in the Pavillon de Marsan, a voluminous and impressive array of his drawings and other productions, brought together in recognition of the fact that his genius needed to be, in the characteristic

French phrase, definitively established and consecrated. For this purpose the organizers wisely chose as their most desirable souvenir of the great draughtsman the series of illustrations for "Don Quixote" in which he fulfilled the ambition of a lifetime; but there were scores of other things to affirm his fame. And it was high time for him to be thus commemorated. When he died, some seven years prior to this exhibition held in his honor, I remember noticing with chagrin how little attention was paid to the event by the world at large. And yet public indifference to the termination of a remarkable career was perhaps to be expected.

When this born draughtsman left Madrid, his native town, in his nineteenth year, and went to Paris, he reached there just in time to make sketches of the siege for the *Monde Illustré*. His work was so good that he had thereafter no difficulty in obtaining commissions. He poured forth illustrations for periodicals and books with apparently inexhaustible fertility, and in the midst of his miscellaneous labors contrived to produce a masterpiece in the shape of a series of drawings for the famous picaresque novel of Quevedo, "Don Pablo de Segovia." He had won fame, and fortune also was almost within his grasp. When he was stricken with paralysis his right side was rendered useless, and though he trained himself to work with his left hand, he necessarily dropped, in a measure, out of the race. He was only thirty years

old. He was not without honors or prosperity during the remaining twenty-three years of his life, but he was as modest as he was proud, and worked on contentedly in a retirement which explains, in some sort, the slight attention paid to his death.

Strolling one day on the outskirts of Paris with the late Philip Gilbert Hamerton, I spoke to him of Vierge, whose "Pablo" illustrations, in a copy of the book I had picked up in Spain, had excited my admiration, and he burst into enthusiastic eulogy of the artist, who had long been his friend. Hamerton praised him as one of the most extraordinary technicians he had ever known, but he was almost warmer in his tribute to Vierge as a man. "Be sure you go to see him," he said. "You will find him one of the gentlest and sunniest of afflicted men." Soon after I had the privilege of spending a couple of hours with him in his home at Boulogne-sur-Seine. He lived in a little house set back in a narrow garden, with vines clambering everywhere, even across the old iron gate through which one passed on ringing the far-off, tinkling bell. As I walked up the gravel path I saw on the right a wicker enclosure occupied by a number of aristocratic fowls. On the left, further on, was the house, and behind it the studio in which he spent most of his time. It was a comparatively bare room, with few of the luxurious appointments familiar in the studios of Parisian artists. Vierge found it agreeable to rub along with a few pictures,

a few cupboards, a few well-filled bookcases, an old table, with one or two chairs, and a screen hung with dilapidated costumes. There were no rugs on the floor. It was, in fact, a very Spanish interior, characteristic of a race capable of being gorgeous to a degree, or equally austere. Vierge himself provided the best key to his surroundings. He seemed simplicity itself, a tall and stalwart man who must have been commanding in the old days, before paralysis overtook him. It was pathetic to see this fine artist compelled to move with hesitation across the room, compelled to rely upon his wife's interpretation of the almost soundless movement of his lips for the understanding of his every wish. Madame Vierge, a kindly, matronly woman, as simple in her manners as was her husband, was his right hand in everything save his drawing. It was good to see the two together, Vierge as full of gayety as though he were in the best of health, and laughing over his own jokes with the spontaneity of the true humorist.

They told me of what had happened when the paralysis came. His memory failed then, he lost his power to remember the significance of the printed word; but, read aloud to him, everything became vivid in his mind. The slightest jottings in his old sketch-books gave him sufficient material for elaborate drawings, for when once facts of architecture, scenery or costume were brought back to him by visual suggestion, he never forgot them again. His

talk was naturally limited, but what he said was in a modest and generous strain. He expressed his admiration for Abbey, Pennell and one or two other Americans, and spoke cordially of the illustrative work in American magazines. When he referred to his own performances it was with the intonation and gesture of a man regarding himself as the least important practitioner of his craft. When we talked of the folio edition of "Pablo," which had been brought out in English, with his illustrations, he was wholly good-humored over the fact that no one had up to that time thought it worth while to send him a copy. There was something touching in his sweetness. Life had used him hardly. The paralytic stroke from which he suffered was doubly tragic, considering his profession. But he did not murmur. The atmosphere in his almost sequestered home was as cheery as the sunny suburb in which he had made it.

II

Vierge long since saved his critics the trouble of "placing" him by the simple process of seizing the chief position in modern pen draughtsmanship and holding it. It is the purity of his method that makes him unique. In the sphere of pen draughtsmanship, by which is meant, of course, that of the book and magazine illustrator, he is what Velasquez is in the sphere of painting, or Rembrandt in the sphere of etching, a man of genius whose technical practice

constitutes a kind of law. Fortuny, his gifted countryman, made some brilliant pen drawings, but not even in the best of them did he so "live by line" as it was Vierge's habit to live. Neither Menzel nor Keene, his two greatest contemporaries, had quite his way of giving the beholder a sense of delight in pen drawing for its own sake. Phil May might have approached him in this, but Phil May, *pace* Mr. Whistler, had not an atom of Vierge's distinction of style. That is the Spanish artist's great virtue. His technique is not merely impeccable, but has quality —is an affair of manual dexterity enriched by temperament.

He was, indeed, temperamental or nothing, a man for whom study could do no more than superficially affect the fruits of instinct. I suppose he had something of the modern artist's *flair* for "documentation," and frequented the paths of historical research enough to make sure of his facts when he was dealing in the costumes and accessories of bygone social epochs. But there was nothing in him of the pedantic archæologist. What would he have done with the innumerable properties and authorities on which some artists of to-day lean so heavily? Perhaps he would have cherished them, if he could have fitted them into his modest studio, but I prefer to believe that having once devoured them with his eyes he would have let them go. That, at all events, is the impression I get from his innumerable designs, every one

of which has the spontaneity of an improvisation though it is "all of a piece," a work more convincing than the most elaborate Academical reconstruction is apt to be. His people wear their clothes as though they had a right to them, and move about in scenes to which it is obvious that they were really born. They always move — a fact which must have done almost as much as Vierge's style to commend him to the publishers and editors he sought on coming up to Paris from Madrid in search of work. The military painters, men like De Neuville and Detaille, might have envied him the facile truth with which he sketched the stirring incidents of the Commune. He loved action, if we may judge from his personal tastes before the paralytic stroke that practically chained him to his studio in his prime, and a mobile subject called forth his best efforts. He handled it with ease and swing. In my collection of his illustrations there is a *gouache* of a refectory at the Salpêtrière in which the note of movement in the central figure, a nurse walking rapidly down the room, is caught up and repeated in the attitudes and fantastic gestures of all the surrounding patients. The scene has a horrible reality, the more horrible because nothing in it is exaggerated — Vierge seems to have seized in a flash the most natural aspects of his unnatural theme.

He used the same insight when he turned — as he was always turning — to more romantic material. In

romance as in reality, in books as in city streets, hospitals and theatres, or wherever else his insatiable eyes carried him, he looked for the things that mean not glamour but actual life. I miss the glamour, sometimes. There are moments in which I wish that Vierge had put more tenderness and atmosphere into his work, had shown more feeling for sensuous beauty. But pursuit of these less tangible things might have diverted him from his true aim, which was to make his figures look simply human and natural, to portray, above all else, character. This most expert of technicians was never content with technique alone. He had something to say as a great portrait-painter has something to say. Looking at some of his little nude studies you would infer that he had no desire to improve upon his model, to make her the symbol of an idea; they are uncompromising renderings of fact. His pictures of Arabs are nothing more than impressions of the picturesque. In neither case is any imaginative intention visible. But the moment he drew a figure to accompany an author's text, or noted one in the highways for its human interest, he made it a distinct creation, giving it features, demeanor and a gait which could not possibly be confused with the attributes of any other figure in his crowded gallery. His fecundity in this matter has not yet been widely enough recognized. There has been too much talk of his technique, and too little about what he did with it. Thus his "Pablo

de Segovia" is commended to the student as a masterpiece of pen draughtsmanship. I would commend it to him also as a masterpiece of illustration.

The book offers a crushing rebuke to those popular illustrators who work, evidently, each from a single formula, and, having taken the town with a new type of pretty girl, fit her into any environment, any period, any situation, regardless of whether she belongs there or not. Vierge never repeated himself. Every personage and every episode in Quevedo's curious novel he drew with a freshness disclosing the liveliest mental activity. In nothing does the artist show his sympathy for his author more than in his humor. It takes here and there a Rabelaisian turn, but mostly it is of the grim sardonic sort characteristic of the Spaniards. Moreover, though Vierge delighted in a passage of comedy involving several actors, he could give as free play to his humor in the delineation of a single type. He could draw you a pious matron or a mischievous soubrette with equal whimsicality. His beggars are superb, the finest in European art since Callot or Hogarth. In fact he seems to have had a special feeling for the life of the vagabond; he relished the grotesque elements in it, and sketched it in "Pablo" with so racy a touch that the story gains new vitality from his embellishment of it. Yet so wide was his scope that it may be doubted if the figures in his compositions are any more effective in preserving the illusion than are the

architectural or landscape backgrounds against which they are placed.

In his treatment of these things he used great restraint. Indoors or out, he looked only for the essentials, and put them in their proper place with a judgment that is by itself a joy to the connoisseur of the art of omission. One of his "Pablo" drawings has always seemed to me to illustrate this point particularly well. It is the sketch of Pablo in converse with a pedestrian beneath the shadow of the old Roman aqueduct at Segovia. Who but Vierge, I wonder, could have introduced that cyclopean structure into a design, the picturesqueness of which is so light in hand, with such aptness and such skill? He indicates the great mass of masonry with lines of the utmost delicacy, keeps the motive in due subordination to the two figures in the foreground, yet there you have *El Puente del Diablo* in all its stark weightiness — an instance, if ever there was one, of "local color" judiciously applied. Vierge was chary of his blacks when distributing his light and shade. The richest in tone of all his "Pablo" drawings is the night scene in which the hero has his encounter with the *alguazils*, and this is chiefly remarkable for its subtly manipulated greys. Fortuny, executing this design with brush or pen, but especially with the pen, would have shattered the darkness of the cavern-like street with violent strokes of light, and would have turned the shadows into pools of inkiness.

Vierge liked the quieter key. Even when his scenes are bathed in light he keeps them, somehow, cool; there is no glare, there is no shock in the transition from sunshine into shadow. He knew all that there is for the pen draughtsman to know about values and rendered a Spanish street or square, or open landscape, with a truthfulness that evades many a painter using a varied palette. Still further to demonstrate his fertility and his deftness of hand, he threw in, as though for good measure, head and tail pieces as truly decorative in conception as they are polished in execution. He was a master of the vignette as he was a master of the full-dress composition; his still life is as effective in its way as his most ambitious studies of action are in theirs.

All this he had shown in the pages of "Pablo" and elsewhere when paralysis deprived him of the use of his right hand, and he had to begin life all over again under a terrible handicap. Training himself to draw with his left hand, however, he became proficient enough not simply to carry on his work as before, but to undertake an heroic task — and to finish it. This was the illustration of "Don Quixote," which he undertook for the Scribners and completed on the eve of his death. Going slowly over the plates in this book as the four volumes went through the press, a process which, as it happened, I was privileged to follow from the beginning to the end, I marvelled anew that an artist situated as he was

could have had the courage to embark upon such an enterprise, to say nothing of seeing it through. When I saw him in his studio not long before he started this series, it was with difficulty that he could write his name. These designs make it plain that, having once conquered his physical disability, he recovered all his brilliancy of style, and, in power of invention, made a stride forward.

They reveal him as an extraordinary illustrator of Cervantes, following the immortal narrative with unerring perception for the right passage to illustrate, and with as sure a faculty for giving the right form to his illustration. His inspiration never flags; there is not a perfunctory drawing in the whole collection. The gaunt hero of the Spanish classic carries himself throughout with a kind of galliard austerity, but his expression is never stereotyped. The broad humor so well exploited in illustrating Quevedo is exchanged for a kindlier sense of fun, and at the same time, in setting forth those wonderful adventures, Vierge employed all his old vivacity, all his dramatic point. As you turn the pages you will note the artist's freedom in grouping, his readiness in characterization, his veracious and picturesque touch in the handling of landscape and architecture, and his adroitness in the fabrication of head and tail pieces. You note, in addition, that the work as a whole possesses a richer significance; that Vierge truly rose to the height of his theme and, responding to the finer ap-

peal in Cervantes than that which he had found in Quevedo, produced a masterpiece greater even than his "Pablo." The "Don Quixote" drawings are lighter in tone than their famous predecessors; I suppose because long confinement to the studio had unconsciously adjusted the artist's vision to a more subdued key. But this only heightens the charm of his designs, making the delicacy of his line more apparent. The publication of the book, marking the crowning achievement of a well-spent life, was a memorable event in the history of illustrated literature.

XI

Secular Types in Italian Mural Decoration

I. Pintoricchio
II. Ghirlandajo
III. Carpaccio
IV. Tiepolo

XI

SECULAR TYPES IN ITALIAN MURAL DECORATION

I

PINTORICCHIO

Of Bernardino di Benedetto di Biagio, called il Pintoricchio, or the Little Painter, Vasari says that "although he performed many labors, and received aid from many persons, he had nevertheless a much greater name than was merited by his works." Modern criticism has refuted Vasari, but has, on the whole, made reservations leaving the Umbrian painter in a somewhat ambiguous position. Those who love him rank him with Perugino. Those who view him with more temperate feelings are constrained to admit that he stands somewhere below the atrabilious yet exquisitely lyrical painter of Citta della Pieve. The exact truth lies, of course, between the two extremes, with this interesting point to be remembered: that Pintoricchio, for all his declinations from this standard or that in some of the elements of his art, had nevertheless a distinction in one field which he made

peculiarly his own. One begins by comparing his decorations with those of Carpaccio and Raphael, his Venetian and Roman contemporaries, but one ends by perceiving that his work was in some respects essentially different from theirs, and therefore to be approached by a different canon of criticism. Interest in his art, perennial for all close students of Italian painting, was revived for the public at large when those chambers in the Vatican in which for many years some important decorations of his had been hidden, were opened in 1897. They were executed for the Borgian Pope, Alexander VI, and in more ways than one they glorify the sinister family to which that Pontiff belonged. Not only is Alexander himself portrayed in one of the frescos, but in the design representing St. Catherine before the Emperor the latter is impersonated by Cæsar Borgia, and Lucrezia, of edifying memory, figures as the Saint. The five apartments in which the surviving members of Pintoricchio's scheme exist make part of a suite of six which belong to the Vatican library and have always been specially designated as the Borgia apartments. Pintoricchio completed them in 1498. It was Pope Leo XIII who made himself responsible for the comparatively slight restoration they needed and had the rooms put in appropriate condition.

Pintoricchio was born at Perugia in 1454. He died at Siena in 1513, according to Vasari, from

ignoble vexation, but, on other testimony, from hunger and neglect, his wife and her lover having shut him out of the house when he was already ill. Vasari states that Perugino was his master, but it has been pointed out that Perugino was only eight years older than Pintoricchio, and that the latter was more probably a pupil of Bonfigli or Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. Be this as it may — and the hypothesis of Pintoricchio's having studied under Fiorenzo di Lorenzo seems to me particularly plausible — it is plain from internal evidence that he must have profited by Perugino's example, and that he must also have obtained inspiration from companionship with the young Raphael, whom he would have met in Perugino's *bottega*. These points, however, cannot be traversed minutely here, nor can I go over the old controversy about the share which Raphael may or may not have had in the Piccolomini frescos at Siena. Vasari, with his genial recklessness in playing ducks and drakes with another man's reputation, has been responsible for so many fruitless burrowings among the records of Italian art that his innuendoes about the Siena decorations may be ignored in this brief essay, at least. What is more important is to observe that in Siena, as in the Vatican and in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, at Rome, the work left by Pintoricchio is of a sort to justify him against all the historians, from Vasari down, who are disposed to impugn his originality. In these three places, and in

some others, Pintoricchio can afford to snap his fingers at this kind of criticism. He had qualities akin to those of Perugino and Raphael and was, in fact, as I have indicated, strengthened in his art by their example, but he never leaned upon them, he stood on his own feet. One more citation from Vasari and I have done with that indispensable but sometimes exasperating chronicler. "Bernardino was much in the habit," he says, "of decorating his pictures with ornaments in relief covered with gold, for the satisfaction of persons who understood but little of such matters, to the end that they might have a more showy appearance, a thing which is most unsuitable to painting. Having depicted a story from the life of Santa Caterina in the above-named apartments [in the Vatican], he executed the triumphal arches of Rome, therefore, in relief, and painted the figures in such a manner that the objects which should diminish are brought more prominently forward than those others which should be larger to the eye, a grievous heresy in our art."

Making due allowance for Vasari's offended orthodoxy in this passage, we reach in it, nevertheless, one of the crucial elements in Pintoricchio's genius. Other Italians had employed raised details in their work, in easel pictures, as well as in decorative panels. Pintoricchio used them as an important factor in work executed on a large scale, depending upon them for much of his effect. His gilding was devised as

though by inspiration for that splendid pageant which was his aim and for the creation of which he is to be regarded as apart from all his countrymen. The Borgia rooms being somewhat similar in construction to Raphael's famous "Stanze," and possessing surfaces, curved and flat, that are comparable to the surfaces of the latter, they have sometimes been mentioned in the same breath with them. They are poles apart. Raphael had essentially a philosophic mind, he unfolded symbolic compositions upon the walls of the Vatican, and the philosophers, almost as much as the artists and critics, have pondered his work. Pintoricchio threw himself into what might be called ecclesiastical metaphysics in the Borgia frescos — probably because Pope Alexander ordered him to do so — but the key to the work is not metaphysical, it is one of narration purely. Our artist was a born story-teller. He had proved this before he came to Rome, when painting the Piccolomini frescos at Siena. He proceeded to elaborate all kinds of lofty schemes in the Vatican. The decorations celebrate solemn religious themes, saintly martyrdoms and even more esoteric ideas of a classical and learned nature. But while it would no doubt be legitimate to appraise the Borgia designs as imaginative schemes imperfectly done, it seems more just to regard them — as one regards the walls of the library at Siena — as forming a fragmentary pageant. This was the thing that Pintoricchio, consciously or unconsciously,

always aimed at; this is the thing which he unmistakably secures. He paints a procession, he paints the movements of picturesque groups, and he still quivers with the life of his ornate time. Just what the groups are doing, just what they signify, we cannot always tell. The frescos of the Vatican will not yield to the analysis which sets the decorations of Siena before us as a sort of historical document. I have called him a born story-teller. In so far as his meaning is obscure he belies the epithet. But he has all of the story-teller's vividness, all his skill in making companies of men and women concrete, plausible, human. We can fancy him appalled at the Pope's request for one symbolical design or another, and then blithely going to work with no other thought than to put the personages demanded by his master into natural, genial attitudes, as so many actors in a beautiful and picturesque scene. He lacks imagination, yes, and there is rarely a hint of dramatic ingenuity in his work, but he is a modern of the moderns in the spontaneity of his accent, in the naturalness of his crowds.

Having decided to set forth his group, having laid out his background of landscape and architecture, having evolved, as it were, another page of his picture-book, Pintoricchio drew upon those resources which Vasari thought so heretical. He had others. He had brilliant coloring — some of it among the most brilliant of the Renaissance — and he had draughts-

manship, fortifying, in its turn, a happy gift of characterization when it came to the introduction into his design of such tangible types as Lucrezia or Cæsar or the Pope himself. But the raised details were necessary to him, they helped him to get that warmth and even that splendor which are as the crown and finish to his art. The eye lingers over the individual figures in his compositions as it lingers over those in the pictures of the Bellini, of Carpaccio, of dozens of Italians from Botticelli to Tiepolo and Longhi. But most of all the spectator is aware of a broad and beautiful impression as of something gorgeous passing by, of glimpses into a quaint and yet majestic world where amazing people jostle one another on their way to the execution of some business or other — one does not quite know what it is and does not quite care. Of course, this purely sensuous appeal of Pintoricchio's has its drawbacks. A little of Raphael's intellectuality would be welcome. Something of Perugino's tender Umbrian charm would transmogrify the whole work. But tenderness in Pintoricchio was always limited. It comes to the surface fitfully in some of his smaller paintings, but when he is working as at Siena and in the Vatican the essential spirit of the man dominates him and puts the lyrical note into the background while a frankly material feeling comes to the front. Fortunately the materialism is never gross. On the contrary, there is a touching naïveté about Pintoricchio even in his most superb

flights of courtly pride. He may have remained more or less insensible to the ecstatic fascination of the Umbrian landscape which Raphael found it hard to forget in the midst of his Roman triumphs; he may have missed the last secret of that feminine witchery, that pensive beauty, which the business-like Perugino knew and worshipped, for all his hardness and sordid, jealous passion. But he was an Italian living in the time of the Renaissance, he was quick, receptive, full of lively feeling, and sensitive to the spell of beauty in all but its most poetic relations. The upshot of it all is that he is neither a major nor a minor painter, but one of those rare individualities who through the richness of their merits and the qualities of their defects become inexplicably endeared where greater men are regarded with not half so much affection. The Siena frescos would alone have kept him famous. The opening of the Borgia apartments, the decorations of which are in very nearly as perfect a state of preservation as those of the Piccolomini library, have heightened and extended his renown.

Some artists are disposed to regard the decorations of the fifteenth century as spent forces, with nothing in them for modern emulation, but, as a matter of fact, they are full of living inspiration. Puvis de Chavannes recognized this, going even further back than to Pintoricchio and profiting by the example of the Giotteschi. I have referred to Pintoricchio's

modernity of spirit. He had also, and so had Carpaccio, Mantegna, Raphael, Signorelli, Sodoma, Michael Angelo, and Perugino, extraordinary modernities of design. That is to say, these painters exercised exactly the arts of composition which are required to-day in decorative painting. Moreover, since modern mural painting — as the French have shown much more than the Americans — must concern itself with the narration of historical events and with the representation of scenes from actual life, there is obvious benefit to be derived from men who were above all things skilful in the adaptation of virile themes to architectural spaces. Raphael was a philosophic painter, but in the famous scene of the conflagration in the Borgo he handled prosaic material as effectively as he did the figures of his "Parnassus." Pintoricchio had remarkable ability in this grouping of unimaginative subjects with appropriateness to the form of his wall. The Siena decorations glorify the travels of Æneas Piccolomini, and some of the episodes treated are of the most matter-of-fact description, but the figures are disposed between the dividing pilasters with as much regard for the general effect of the whole chamber as though they were parts of a conventional design. In his strictly conventional work, too, Pintoricchio has much to teach the moderns, just as Raphael has much to teach them in the "Loggie" of the Vatican. Both men appreciated the value of arabesques and of geometrical patterns

skilfully applied. In the Vatican the attention is naturally concentrated upon Pintoricchio's paintings, but his stucco ornamentation and his laying out of the ceilings will be recognized as equally characteristic of his genius. He, with all his astonishing facility in purely pictorial directions, was, nevertheless, incapable of the loosely scattered effects to which the modern mural painter is so prone. He devised a picture-book at Siena and another one in the Borgia apartments, but in both cases he bound the pages together so symmetrically, with so penetrating a sense of their interdependence, that, while he falls far short of the grandeur of Raphael, he is comparable to him in the unity of his work with the architecture in which it is set.

II

GHIRLANDAJO

Amongst the Florentine painters of the Renaissance Ghirlandajo occupies a position indubitably honorable, yet not to this day permanently fixed. Like Pintoricchio he has his rather grudging critics. For one who will whole-heartedly laud him there are generally several who will patronize his art, if they do not dismiss him with something like contempt as "a mere illustrator." Well, as we have seen in our brief survey of the work of Pintoricchio, illustration,

according to the hypothesis of the old Italian mural decorators, could take on a not by any means negligible significance. In the hands of Domenico Ghirlandajo it was made extraordinarily beguiling.

This painter, who was born in 1449 and died forty years later, was the son of Tommaso Bigordi, a goldsmith, who was known as "del Ghirlandajo" from the gold and silver garlands made in his workshop for the Florentine ladies to wear in their hair. The lad was apprenticed to his father's craft, but he soon turned to painting, under the instruction of Baldovinetti. He was quick and clever and readily made a career for himself. As this developed he showed that he had profited by study of the works of men greater than his chosen master. In his earlier productions the influence of Masaccio has been traced, as well as that of Verrocchio. He was not to disclose a genius comparable with that of either of those two great painters, and this not simply because he lacked their power in respect to style, but because he had nothing like their subtler resources. He was not a high-souled creative genius, and, in fact, if you begin to compare him with this or that Renaissance type of the noblest calibre you steadily expose his limitations. He has not an atom of the linear strength and felicity of Botticelli. He has none of the Roman austerity and power, none of the plastic grace of Mantegna. But it would be manifestly unfair to dwell on the things which Ghirlandajo lacked. The

important point is to apprehend him for what he was. The most recent and on the whole the most favorable of his biographers, Mr. Gerald S. Davies, concisely and accurately describes him as "the simple, straightforward historian of the outward appearance of the life of the Renaissance as he saw it and knew it in the town which he knew best and loved best — his own Florence." In this character he distinguished himself with a sympathy and a skill making him invaluable to the student of his time, and, what is more, delightful to the lover of Renaissance painting who is not obsessed by a desire to distribute pedagogic marks of merit among all the members of the Florentine school.

He was an adept at pictorial narrative, and he had a passion for portraiture, as well as a kind of loving *flair* for the details of costume and what we may call the furniture of pictures. His frescos in the Sistine Chapel and elsewhere are dignified performances, imbued with sincere if not profound emotion. Mr. Davies, discussing the question of what his painter made of the figure of Christ, is perhaps unnecessarily analytic. He finds in Ghirlandajo's ideal "more of manhood than in the sweet and feminine beauty of Perugino, but far less of sorrowful dignity and depth of feeling, far less of the Divine, than in his great contemporary Leonardo." He goes on to bring Piero della Francesca and Melozzo da Forli into the argument. All this is beside the point. It is better

to face the fact that Ghirlandajo had no great spiritual inspiration and have done with it. One may grant, also, with the same promptitude, that he was no more the master of composition than he was the master of line; but his work has the vitality of work that is founded on life. Though he was not a draughtsman or a designer of genius, he drew and designed well enough, he put his compositions together in life-like fashion and bodied forth his figures not only truthfully but with some breadth and nervous force. He was a competent craftsman, a painter who knew how to fill a given space in such wise that you cannot pass his decorations by, but must pause and look with ever-growing sympathy upon his intimate scenes and friendly, human personages.

Witness, for example, that fresco of his in Santa Maria Novella, "The Birth of the Virgin Mary," which shows him at his best. Could anything be more beguiling than this interior, in which St. Anne and the women about her are put before us with no pretence whatever that they have not been studied from Ghirlandajo's contemporaries in a Florentine palazzo? The maiden who advances toward the nurses and their little charge is believed to be Lodovica Tornabuoni, but even if her name had never been surmised we would know that in this figure, as in every other included in the composition, the painter had made a portrait. That, in fact, was what he was always doing, and in the mass of his work any num-

ber of personages have been identified. In the fresco of "Zacharias and the Angel," for example, also in Santa Maria Novella, we may see not only divers members of the Tornabuoni and Tornaquinci families, but the noted humanists, Cristoforo Landini, Poliziano and Marsilio Ficino.

Because Ghirlandajo was content to bring these people into his paintings, grouping them adroitly and with animation, but showing no poignant emotion and no rare inventive faculty, and because, finally, his style is not far above the pedestrian order, he is frequently dismissed, as I have said, as just an illustrator. But are not his illustrations charming? Was he not an accomplished painter according to his lights? Could he not, on occasion, fashion a Madonna full of matronly dignity and touched with a grave sweetness? Moreover, is not that portraiture of his something in itself altogether captivating? No merely bourgeois hand could have produced that lovable portrait of an old man and his grandson which is preserved in the Louvre, or that exquisite profile, in Mr. Morgan's collection, of Giovanna degli Albizzi. Ghirlandajo is one of those painters who we know perfectly well are not demigods, like Michael Angelo or Leonardo, but whose lesser gifts are equally authentic and whose services to us it is foolish to underestimate and vulgar to scorn.

III

CARPACCIO

When Pompeo Molmenti and his friend Gustav Ludwig were writing their fine biography of Vittore Carpaccio they delved deep into Venetian history and brought to light all the facts about their hero that are likely ever to be known. But the prettiest "find" in their volume is a passage of modern origin, a fragment of a letter by Burne-Jones. "Of all things," he writes to Lady Lewis, "do go to the little chapel of S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni, where the Carpaccios are. The tiniest church that ever was, like a very small London drawing-room — but with pictures!!! And whenever you see him give him my love." It is in just this spirit that it is well to approach the work of the old Venetian painter. If he is anything he is lovable, a type of peculiarly sweet and winning art.

Carpaccio, born in the middle of the fifteenth century, touches hands, so to say, on one side with the tradition of the Venetian primitives, and on the other with that of the golden age. He preserved in his work much of the naïveté of the formative period in the history of the school. We read of him as being summoned in company with his master, Lazzaro Bastiani, to appraise Giorgione's paintings on the façade of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, and this episode

vividly brings home to us the fact of his contact with the movement which owed so much to the painter of Castelfranco and to Titian. Yet Carpaccio never developed the glowing tones which were ultimately to dominate Venetian painting. His color, which is sometimes exquisite, is, on the whole, restrained. Indeed, the whole character of his work is that of an artist in no wise impassioned, but trusting always to careful observation of the world in which he lived.

The fates conspired to give him precisely the opportunities calculated to be favorable to the development of his gifts. We know that he was employed with Gentile and Giovanni Bellini and others to decorate the Hall of the Great Council in the Ducal Palace with historical compositions, but even if his contributions to this vast scheme had not been destroyed by the great fire of 1577 we would have the essentials of his art in those works which he produced for one or another of the fraternities conspicuous in the social and religious life of his day. These organizations wanted a painter of picture-books, and such a painter they found in Carpaccio.

It was customary in old Venice for men and women to form themselves into schools or societies dedicated to the observance of religious duties and to the forwarding of good works. Always these bodies enrolled themselves beneath the standard of some saint. Thus the "Scuola of Devotion of St. Ursula" framed its statutes and rules at once in the service of the

Madonna and in that of the martyred Ursula. These were also mutual-benefit societies, as may be seen from the decree of the Council of Ten relating to the Dalmatian Scuola officially recognized in 1451.

> Having heard the devout and humble petition of certain Sclavonian sailors, resident in this blessed city of Venice, moved by piety, knowing and observing the infinite variety of men of their nation . . . stricken to death, or sickness, who perish of necessity and hunger, having no support, nor help from any one in this world because they are aliens . . . leave was implored by the said Sclavonians to form in Venice a Brotherhood, otherwise a Scuola, according to the manner of the other small Scuole in honor of Messer S. George and Messer S. Tryphonius in the church of Messer S. John of the Templars . . . by means of which the said supplicants can receive and hold alms for the support of such of their brethren, and besides that the said brethren can go and carry to burial the said brethren for the Love of God, and can place their corpses in the vaults of the said Scuola.

As these Scuole waxed the more popular and prosperous they built their places of meeting the more luxuriously, and, of course, sought the aid of art. Carpaccio appears to have become a kind of painter in ordinary to the Scuole. For the brethren of St. Ursula he painted the canvases which were originally placed on the walls of a building erected beside the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, but which are now housed in the Academy. For the Dalmatians aforesaid he made the series which may still be seen at S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni. For the Albanians in Ven-

ice he produced the series, now scattered, illustrating the life of the Virgin. He painted other pictures, and some of them, like the "Presentation" for the Church of San Giobbe, now in the Academy, are superb monuments to his genius, but you get the fullest sense of his character as an artist from the "picture-books" he made for the Scuole.

I call them picture-books, because in each set of decorations that he painted he gave himself up to narrative, telling his story in a succession of scenes, which might have, now and again, a certain mystical significance, but which he always interpreted as closely as possible in terms of ordinary Venetian life. He copied the gait and demeanor of his contemporaries, reproduced their costumes with minute care, and in his accessories, as in his broad effect, sought an intimately realistic impression. There is an almost domestic note in his religious designs. His St. Ursula asleep in bed might be a kinswoman in his own house, and the picture he made of St. Jerome in his study was doubtless based on a room familiar to the painter in its every detail. Carpaccio had a fine sense of composition, which comes out magnificently in a painting like the St. Giobbe altar-piece mentioned above, but in his Scuole pictures his feeling for design is subordinated to his eager desire to tell a straightforward and artless story. This is where his naïveté comes in. He is too keen on his narrative to worry overmuch about questions of form

and balance. Some time ago Mr. Sidney Colvin pointed out resemblances between episodes in works by Carpaccio and drawings made by one Reuvich for Breydenbach's "Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam," printed at Mayence in 1486. If he plagiarized it was only in the most innocent and childlike fashion and with no sacrifice of his individuality. He simply took what would help him to build up his simple tale, making it the more natural and picturesque. There was, in fact, a good deal of the ingenious craftsman about Carpaccio.

There was also a good deal of heart, of warm and tender feeling for religious things. His spirituality was none the less genuine because he expressed it in pictures reflecting Venetian types and ways. He was profoundly sincere. The criticism which would pigeon-hole and label every manifestation of art would assign to him a modest place in the hierarchy of Venetian painting. But it is wiser to take him for what he is; to rejoice in his simple realism and his unworldly spirit, and ignore the question as to his relative value.

IV

TIEPOLO

It is a long step from Carpaccio to Tiepolo. Indeed, a great gulf stretches between the naïve illustrator of fifteenth-century manners, with his simple but sincere religious sentiment, and the worldly, even

pagan artist who gayly decorated the churches, palaces and villas of Venice in her decadence. But that gulf is easily bridged where types of authentic power are concerned. The transition from Carpaccio to Tiepolo is, after all, that from one true artist to another, a transition never impeded by differences of temperament. To sit for a quiet hour in that little church of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, with mind and heart attuned to the pure and almost childlike inspiration of Carpaccio's paintings there, and to plunge immediately afterward into Tiepolo's hectic *monde* is to feel, momentarily at least, that a rather unedifying descent has been made. But the observer's mood is soon changed. He sees that Tiepolo's violence, after Carpaccio's tranquillity, may be the sign of a lower nature, but is also compatible with the exercise of great artistic gifts. Indeed, his impressions of the older master threaten to fade, for he perceives that, as a technician, as a painter, Carpaccio was scarce qualified to grind Tiepolo's colors. The eighteenth-century decorator may not have had a great soul, he may not have had the faintest spiritual emotion, but he was a prodigious man of his hands. Without underestimating his mentality, we may still see in him just the consummate and prolific craftsman. We recognize in him, too, that central virtue of sane vigor which will lend a kind of dignity even to an artist not exceptionally dowered with intellectual or imaginative power.

There is a curious contrast between the man and

his time. When Tiepolo was born, late in the seventeenth century, the glory of Venice had begun to wane. Elements of corruption were at work in her political and industrial life. Manners were deteriorating. The old heroic traits of the people had practically disappeared and an enfeebled populace had only the artists it deserved. The splendid tradition of Veronese was seemingly as dead as nail in door. Mediocrity triumphed. Trivial feeling and mechanical facility could no further go than in the crowded yet strangely empty compositions of a Bastiano Ricci or a Gregorio Lazzarini. Then appeared Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, like a portent in the sky, and eighteenth-century Venetian art was conclusively rescued from its sad estate. There were other painters who were to make the period memorable — Canaletto and Guardi, with their pictures of the lagoons and the monuments of the city; Rosalba, with her bewitching portraits, and, in the later years of the century, Pietro Longhi, with his vivacious souvenirs of everyday familiar life. But it was only Tiepolo who possessed positive genius; he alone it was who revived something of the splendor of an earlier day.

It is a pity that we cannot know more about the man, about his personality and private life. Signor Molmenti, his efficient biographer, is zealous in research, but he has very little to communicate on the more intimate side of Tiepolo's career. We know that he came from an humble and even obscure

family, for all that he bore a name illustrious in the annals of the Venetian nobility. We know that he received instruction from Lazzarini and that he married a sister of Guardi's. But, for the rest, his story is no more than a record of his work. One fact is made plain by that record — his energy as a traveller. He moved to and fro on Venetian territory and elsewhere in Italy executing commissions, and professional engagements also carried him to Germany and to Spain, if not further afield. Another revelation lying upon the surface of his work bears upon his whole character as an artist. His productivity was enormous. If there is one thing more than another that impresses the student it is his rapid execution, the miraculous ease with which he fills vast spaces.

Tiepolo's art is fairly electrical in its note of animation. The mythological and religious subjects abounding in his work are not by any means profoundly conceived — but then one does not go to him for ideas. His genius is decorative, in the strictest meaning of the term. It is important, however, to distinguish in this matter. The decorative tradition of Raphael is one essentially formal. That of Tintoretto is turbulent with the vitality of life itself. Tiepolo abides by the laws of neither the one nor the other. He does not depend upon the scientifically fixed balance so indispensable to the Roman master. He does not seek the poignant dramatic effect always

characteristic of the great Venetian. He frames an ideal of his own, an ideal of aërial space in which figures are piled helter-skelter upon billowing clouds, or wanton in the empyrean with an almost birdlike freedom. He knew, of course, how to order his resources, how justly to fill a given space; he is entirely rational beneath his seeming airs of reckless improvisation. But the broad impression received from his work is that of a joyous riot of form and color, light and air, of wonderfully poised movement. There is something about him that suggests a great master of the ballet, a man with a gift for deploying his figures in the most intricate fashion, creating a thrilling atmosphere of spontaneous action, but always preserving control over his forces, always adhering more or less to a well-pondered pattern. It is one of the paradoxes of artistic history that this mundane painter, who lightly sentimentalized nearly every religious motive that he touched and turned the gods and goddesses of mythology into operatic figurantes, nevertheless had the largest possible way with him when he tackled a spacious ceiling in church or palace. He was as lavish of thrones as Napoleon himself. It would be amusing to count the number of them reared amid his clouds, or set against the architectural backgrounds he was wont to use on vertical walls or in many of his smaller pictures. He liked the regal type, whether it was Cleopatra or some divinity on Olympus, and he would trick it out with

the most gorgeous habiliments. Did he thereby make it the more convincing? The question is embarrassing for a lover of Tiepolo.

He knows well enough that he could not for a moment believe in his painter's imaginings. They are not, indeed, imaginings at all. Tiepolo could not pull himself up by his boot-straps. He was a child of his time, and he had the fancy of a clever man rather than the creative imagination of a poet. Compare him, for a moment, with Watteau. The romance of the dainty melancholy Frenchman is thin enough, but in his "Embarkation for Cythera," for example, you can still hear, faint but true, the music of faery. Tiepolo is all for the theatre. His paintings of martyrdoms cause no shudders. There is nothing tragic about his Iphigenia, though he paints that marble heroine at the moment of sacrifice. He gives you cunningly arranged tableaus, not scenes vibrating with passion. It is with a certain amazement that one pauses before his "Supper at Emmaus," in the Louvre. By what stroke of fortune, you ask, did he obtain the illumination which led him to the painting of that picture—not a great picture, but not, on the other hand, one without a note of feeling? Ordinarily his sacred compositions leave the spectator cold and sometimes they very nearly move him to a smile. There is an "Annunciation" of his in a private collection at Madrid which is positively comic. The Virgin, standing in her humble room, is dignified

enough, but her winged visitant is literally flopped down upon the floor, and is as grotesque as a figure in a pantomime. It is only when he is illustrating some love-story, like that of Rinaldo and Armida, or is painting scenes of secular pomp, as in the decoration of the Palazzo Labia, or is sketching some episode of Venetian life, as in the "Carnival" which belonged to the late Princess Mathilde, that he is on firm ground as regards the substance of his work. In the main his figures are merely so many bodies to be played with for pictorial and decorative effect. But how superbly he plays with them!

He used them in two ways. Either he flung them with magnificent gesture upon his luminous ceilings, or, as in the Palazzo Labia, the Villa Valmarana and a score of other places, he disposed them with much elegance — and occasionally some humor — against doorways and window-casings, between cool, stately pillars, or in the reposeful attitudes invited by a convenient bench or balustrade. Wherever he painted his grandly robed gods, his nude nymphs, or his ladies and cavaliers in the latest Venetian velvets and ruffles, he drew his models with incomparable sureness and grace and lavished upon them the colors of a palette in which you find reflected the pinks and whites of roses, the blues of heaven and the pearly, glowing flesh tints of Aphrodite fresh risen from the sea. Tiepolo put forth, as has been indicated, an immense amount of work, and an astonishing propor-

tion of it shows him at his best, but if his very essence is to be found anywhere it is to be found in the study of "The Car of Venus," a sketch for a ceiling, which hangs in the Prado. The light charm of the design is alone captivating, but over it all is thrown the glamour of exquisite color. Never were there purer, more flowerlike effects; never was sensuousness nearer to getting itself turned into something subtly poetical. That, then, is Tiepolo's supreme gift, a gift for covering a surface with gay and lovely forms, with color as soft and pleasing as the down on a peach, and so skilfully organizing this entrancing *frou-frou* of his that it becomes magnificently decorative. In the eyes of some enthusiasts he is not unworthy of Veronese, and, indeed, when you think of the wholesome, robust way in which Tiepolo developed his art you cannot deny his right to a place in the great hierarchy of Venetian painting. He had not Veronese's weight and grandeur. But he had the master's sincerity and he was, like Veronese, an artist of genius.

XII

Rodin

XII

RODIN

WHAT immeasurable good luck has followed this artist! No doubt he has had his vicissitudes, in the distant past, but for some years now the Fates have been more than kind to him, bringing him honors and prosperity and everywhere placing his art conspicuously before the world. In fact, Rodin's career as a spoilt child of fortune makes a story by itself. An article in *Le Temps* not long ago represented him as saying that on a visit that he had made to Rome he was scrupulously left alone by the members of the French diplomatic circle there and the people of the Villa Medici, in which neglect he saw an official condemnation of his works. However this may be, it is to be noted that the government commissioned his gigantic—and still unfinished—"Porte de l'Enfer" as far back as 1880, and it has generously entreated him ever since. You positively stumble upon his sculptures in the Luxembourg, there are so many of them in that museum, and elsewhere in Paris they turn up. His "Victor Hugo," in marble, has been placed in the gardens of the Palais Royal. He has contributed to the inside of the

Panthéon, and one of his most important monuments, "Le Penseur," occupies a position directly in front of that building. It is true that the Société des Gens de Lettres rejected his "Balzac," but there was never any occasion for regarding that incident with sorrow, the truth being that in so far as it made a martyr of Rodin it also stimulated to frenzy the enthusiasts who have long made it their business to see that he was not left to toil in obscurity.

There is already in existence a large literature relating to the sculptor. Léon Maillard published a book about him in 1899 — a book especially valuable, by the way, for its illustrations. Another volume, by Camille Mauclair, appeared in an English translation in 1905. Two years later Mr. Frederick Lawton brought out an exhaustive biography, and in 1908 there appeared in Brussels the monumental folio by Judith Cladel. There is a booklet in the "Langham Series" devoted to Rodin, a brief study by Rudolf Dircks, and, unless memory fails me, there is a second monograph by a German author. As for articles in magazines and newspapers, they are as the sands of the seashore. Multitudes of writers have found good "copy" in Rodin. Finally he has taken to letters himself. Grasset, the Paris publisher, recently issued, under the title of "L'Art," a volume in which the sculptor's conversations with his friend Paul Gsell are, by the latter, piously reported and, more recently, this work has been put into Eng-

lish. Never was an artist kept more devotedly in the public eye. The sentimentalists have risen *en masse* to declare his fame, and it is perhaps no wonder that he is to-day one of the most fashionable makers of portraits in the world and the object of a cult. Neither is it surprising that he has become a little oracular in his sayings and a little complacent in his work.

What does it all amount to, and how are we really to regard this man of genius, who is also the hero of a preposterous *réclame?* It is indispensable, at the outset, to lay hold of the fact that the genius is there, or at all events was there when Rodin was in his prime. Nor is there anything at all esoteric or baffling about it. His hierophants, of course, would have it that there is something about him grand, gloomy and peculiar, and quite beyond the scope of ordinary canons of appreciation. They are the people who in an earlier generation would have stupefied themselves making guesses at the Correggiosity of Correggio. Now they occupy themselves with the Rodinesquerie of Rodin. Of this it is enough to say that "there ain't no sich thing." Rodin is not a mystic, thinking profound thoughts and embodying them in puzzling forms. Take, for example, his group called "Pygmalion and Galatea." Rodin once showed Gsell the first *ébauche* for that composition, wherein he represented the embrace of a nymph and a faun. Naturally, his interlocutor

was astonished, and wondered if subject, as subject, meant anything to the sculptor. It did not do, the latter replied, to give too much importance to the themes that he interpreted. Doubtless, he added, they had their value and helped to interest the public, but the great anxiety of the artist, he maintained, should be to get the play of living muscle into his work; the rest mattered little. That carries us quickly to the point with Rodin. It is merely life that has interested him, and, with life, character and expression. His genius has been for these things, and for these things alone. It is an old story that when he sent "The Age of Brass" to the Salon in 1877 the jury accused him of having put before them nothing more nor less than a cast from life. They could not have paid him a juster compliment.

Gsell, describing his master's method of work, tells us that Rodin is wont to have several nude models, men and women, moving about in the studio. He is always watching them, training his eye, and presently, when he notes a good pose, he arrests the model and sets to work. Gsell could see that there might be something in this more favorable to spontaneous effect than the mode followed in most studios, where the model takes an attitude fixed by the sculptor, but he wondered if Rodin's system did not put him, so to say, at the orders of his models. "No," replied the artist, "I am not at their orders, but at those of Nature." He qualifies the principle

there laid down, however, by observing that everything still depends upon the eye of the artist. The mediocre craftsman, interpreting a pose thus observed, would not get out of it that which is accessible to the man of genius. Thus it is interesting to note in passing that Rodin has no patience with those contemporaries of his who complain that they cannot make a good portrait unless they have a sitter with an interesting head and face. He, I gather, would undertake to find almost any sitter worth while, and accordingly one is not surprised when in his talks with Gsell he brushes aside the idea that the Greeks were luckier than ourselves in their models. The Frenchman is not in the least dissatisfied with the men and women who pose for him, and, in fact, grows quite ecstatic over certain of his types, bitterly regretting, as he looks over some of his drawings, that he has not done justice in them to quite obvious traits. We see him, then, in the rôle of the realist, if we must find some convenient designation for his mode of procedure, and this view of the matter is easily confirmed by reference to his works. Look at such sculptures as the statues of Adam and Eve, the grim study of aged and broken-down womanhood, "La Vieille Heaulmière," the statues of "Le Penseur" and "The Age of Brass," and the busts of Dalou and Puvis de Chavannes. Their first merit is that of truth, clearly grasped and simply expressed.

It is, too, a truth having a poignant human origin.

"*La Beauté, c'est le caractère et l'expression,*" he says, and you do not find character or expression existing in lifeless shells. The best of Rodin's figures seem to have been realized by him from within outward and hence they possess extraordinary individuality. On the other hand, one has unquestionably seen things more beautiful, and that raises the point as to how far Rodin's genius "carries," how far it justifies the vast claims of his admirers. He loves the Greek masters. He collects their works when he can get hold of them, he is always studying them, and something, a faint something, of their exquisite strength has just touched his own artistic character. The hierophants to whom I have already alluded make an easy mouthful of the assumption that in emulating the Greeks he has quite recaptured their power. The disinterested onlooker can hardly see this. Gsell paints us a charming picture of an evening in the studio at Meudon, with Rodin hovering around his antiques, lamp in hand, and exposing with delight the effects of "color" thus extorted from the old marbles. Throwing a gleam upon one antique torso, he asks, "Is there not there a prodigious symphony in black and white?" Unconsciously, as it seems to me, Rodin was thus exposing the little rift within the lute, he was thus marking his essential detachment from the spirit of Greek art. It is the insidious element of "*le pittoresque*" lurking in the point of view revealed by Gsell's anecdote that promptly

brings Rodin down to his own level, and careful scrutiny of his art soon gives the measure of his fall.

His sculpture is full of "holes," spots where deep shadows play their indubitably effective part. Bodies are flung about at any angle, limbs are entwined or lifted in nominally sublime gestures to heaven, and one immediate result of this contortion is an amazing play of light and shade. In unskilful hands a procedure of the sort instantly gives itself away, but Rodin is, among other things, uncannily clever, and there is nobody like him for disguising a meretricious habit beneath an air of primitive simplicity. "Primitive" is, to be sure, the very word. How many times has it not been applied to figures of Rodin's like the "Adam," say, in which muscular arms and legs and gnarled extremities recall, as the elect would express it, some early race, heaved up out of the caverns of the earth by the sheer force of nature? Only this primitiveness does not wear well, especially if you happen to turn back from it to the serene might of Greek or Egyptian sculpture or to the heroic types of Michael Angelo. What is it that first wakes a doubt? It is that these large contours in Rodin's art spell not so much style as manner. The dictionary explains the word "mannerism" after a rather formidable fashion. "Monotonous," it says, "formal or pedantic adherence to the same manner; uniformity of manner, especially a tasteless uniformity without freedom or variety: excessive adherence

to a characteristic mode or manner of action or treatment." Let us by all means eschew pedantry and commit no such sin as that of hurling the dictionary at Rodin's head. And yet — there is appositeness in that outrageous definition. Repetition has nearly killed Rodin; not repetition of specific types of composition, though that has been his tendency, but of that very "effect" of his which he founded, in the beginning, so successfully on truth.

It is, after all, rather narrowly the truth of the flesh, endued, as we have seen, with character and expression, but primarily and too exclusively an affair of bone and muscle, blood and skin. Over and over again it comes out in the conversations reported by Gsell that what enthralls Rodin is the body, as the body. Steadily, as time has gone on, he has played with it as with a medium, until a bony plane, a leg full of sinews, a soft voluptuous curve, has come to mean to him what a theme means to the musician improvising upon an instrument. Whither does it all tend? The genius who preserves undimmed an authentic inspiration is constructive while he plays, and produces, one after the other, organic fabrics of design. By those works of his you know him for the great creative artist. The lesser man does not fail us in quantity, nor is he necessarily without a certain passing charm, but he remains inchoate and capricious, and by his works you know him, not for the great creative artist, but for the diffusive, unstable "tem-

perament." Rodin began by suggesting that he might, perhaps, range himself in the first category, and there are among his earlier works pieces so fine that it is idle to imagine their ever falling into oblivion. But for years he has been unmistakably the man of the smaller gift, consummate in his exploitation of that gift, but none the less a man on the wrong track. He aimed at grandeur, as witness the astounding pell-mell of figures in the "Porte de l'Enfer" and the massy conception of "Les Bourgeois de Calais," but grandeur was not in him in any deep, spiritual and lasting sense. He figured to himself Victor Hugo, listening to the voices of nature, and if we are to believe the nonsense of his acolytes the poet as he portrayed him is truly rapt by the murmurs of the sea, but, as a matter of fact, he shows us only an old gentleman looking absurd in the absence of his clothes. He has had any number of noble intentions, which we are told he has fulfilled, but he may design an Apollo in a violent attitude, and we get only attitude; he may depict for us Ugulino and his sons, but we have simply some sprawling bodies, instead of that figure of freezing horror whose words Matthew Arnold put among the touchstones of great poetry—

> I wailed not, so of stone grew I within,
> *They* wailed.

That instinct of his for character and expression is searching, so far as it goes, and he moves you

when he wreaks it upon subjects that lie well within his scope. With the mere human animal he never fails, but gets always intense reality and movement. Some of his portraits, too, have a rich vitality, but it is significant that while he immensely admired Puvis de Chavannes it has been one of the bitterest regrets of his career that his bust of the latter did not please the great painter, who thought it, in fact, a caricature. The episode sheds a little light on the question of Rodin's ability to rise with his theme. He faced in Puvis de Chavannes a type of great intellectual force, a calm and lofty soul. He could model the stately head and express the physical life in it, but he could do no more. What was subtlest and most precious in his friend's character escaped him. Apropos of this faltering touch of his when he is moving about in worlds not realized, one may profitably compare the first study for the head of his "Balzac" with the head of his statue as it was finally modelled. The earlier version is the conception of the realist pure and simple. We owe the other to the realist doubled with the would-be "interpreter," the would-be dealer in truth heightened by imagination. In neither does he portray the true Balzac, but he is at least on safer ground in the first mask, which is an affair of mere flesh and blood. Extend this criticism from the field of portraiture into that of symbolism and of those poetic myths from which Rodin has drawn so many of his motives, and you fall upon even greater dubiety. Despite

the vaultings of his ambition he does not impress us in his works as a man of ideas, calling new and wonderful things out of the void and animating them with a life stronger than that of poor human clay.

Rodin's obvious handicap has been the *quality* of his mind and imagination. His is a profoundly sensuous art, sensuous to the core, and while he has been attacking high erected themes these have not, on his own confession, really mattered to him; it has been enough for him to caress in his marble or bronze a living form. And all the time he has been betrayed by his immense technical resource. It is a by-word among sculptors that Rodin, as a modeller, takes their breath away. His is a fatal facility if ever an artist had that affliction. One of Gsell's most interesting chapters describes the sculptor modelling in his presence a statuette after the principles of Pheidias, and then doing another *à la* Michael Angelo. The old fingers worked like magic; almost in a moment the statuettes were there. It is interesting to know that, and delightful into the bargain. One rejoices in skill so swift and so sure, so responsive to the movement of a fine intelligence. And among Rodin's works one would have to be much of a pedant and philistine to remain insensitive to that marvellous modelling of his, which is just one endless succession of subtleties pleasing and true. How they soothe the eye! How you kindle to the mere tenderness of form that they express! It is amusing, for

a moment, to remember in their presence one achievement of another French master of form, "Le Bain Turc" of Ingres. The picture is a wonderful bit of drawing, but it has no warmth, no glow. There is a burning life in Rodin's nudities. But it is a life invoked through mechanical skill and through a very earthy passion, if through passion at all. It is perhaps the most conclusive of all testimonies to the truth of this impression that there is no one above the ruck in modern sculpture who is less haunting than Rodin. We observe his work with interest and enjoyment, but it leaves no mark.

That seems, perhaps, a risky thing to say of the man who bulks so largely not only in French but in other museums, who has had so many imitators all over the world, and has stimulated such a horde of eulogists to unceasing effort. When one has accounted for all the ignorance and sentimentality that have gone to the promotion of the Rodin legend one is still confronted by a body of opinion, among artists as well as among laymen, which is bound to command respect. It is still permissible to believe, however, that Rodin has been vastly overrated, that his great merits lie within clearly defined and, on the whole, rather narrow boundaries, and that when the imitators and the panegyrists have gone down the wind they will be accompanied by a considerable number of his works. By that time there may be, too, a more general recognition of the fact now so curiously

overlooked, that Rodin came in an epoch not overwhelmingly rich in great sculpture, and by virtue of that very fact secured a not unprofitable salience which might not have been his in other circumstances. The modern French school has been characterized since Rude by thoroughly academic traits, and its leaders, save for a rare type like Dubois, have lacked in distinction what they have possessed in manual dexterity. Rodin, with his truth to nature, his skill in reproducing the surface beauty of nature, his light and shade, and his freedom, has seemed dowered with a greater originality than he actually could claim. He has been the "new" man, the one type that was "different," and in their longing for reaction against the rules of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Salon crowds of his contemporaries have hailed him as a kind of Moses, destined to lead them into the promised land. Poor Rodin! He never dreamed of doing anything of the sort. Sometimes, in the quietude of reflection among his beloved antiques, he must think with a sort of mild astonishment of all the bother that has been made about his art.

XIII

Four Leaders in American Architecture

I. H. H. Richardson
II. Richard Morris Hunt
III. Charles F. McKim
IV. Daniel H. Burnham

XIII

FOUR LEADERS IN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE is the most richly vitalized of the arts in America to-day, more closely allied than any other to national needs and taste. In the mere bulk and scope of our building operations we have made, in the last twenty-five or thirty years, such heroic strides that if we had not possessed resourceful designers we would have had to invent them. Imagination boggles at the thought of what the United States would now look like if something like an efficient school of architecture had not been developed to keep abreast of a stupendous material expansion. Industrial prosperity, the growth of railroads, civic and State pride—all these things have played royally into the hands of the architects, and with the stern, practical demands made upon them there has gone an extraordinary artistic stimulus. There are more clever, ambitious men in the profession than ever before in our history, and one has only to take a swift bird's-eye view of what they are doing, from New York to California, to see how high the average of merit is everywhere. The first question raised by such a survey

concerns, however, not the men now active but their immediate predecessors. How was this Renaissance brought about? Who were the givers of the new dispensation?

The striking thing about the field of inquiry thus opened before us is the narrowness of its boundaries in respect to time. It is within a comparatively few recent years that American architecture has been made over, and made over, as we shall see, almost as though in a vacuum, with no help from our own historic past. To the casual observer, recalling the Capitol at Washington, certain other public buildings there, the Boston State House, and the New York City Hall, it might seem that there had been carried over from the eighteenth century, well into the nineteenth, a classical tradition quite inspiring enough for any school to go on with in a fairly vigorous frame of mind. Some of the heroes in that austere but fruitful period died a long time ago: Latrobe in 1820 and Bulfinch in 1844, but others, like McComb, who designed our beautiful City Hall, and lived until 1853, seem to touch hands with the present generation. Isaiah Rogers, who built the old Custom House in Wall Street, was alive in 1869. Of course, one superficially reflects, they left a school behind them. They did nothing of the sort. When these architectural masters of ours—for they were masters, in their grave, academic way—retired from the scene, the Muse strayed off into the wilderness. The Civil War,

doubtless, had something to do with her sulky withdrawal. It took time for the artistic atmosphere to clear after that upheaval, and economic as well as less ponderable conditions had to suffer readjustment. The buildings waiting for the genius that was to give them form had also to wait for old fortunes to be restored, and new ones to be made, in order that money might be forthcoming to pay for them. Meanwhile, for several decades, say from the thirties into the seventies and even into the eighties, such architecture as appeared on this continent, apart from that proceeding from the old school, was wont to be a fearful and wonderful thing. I would not frame its elegy. The less said about those well-meant aberrations, the Queen Anne cottage, the brown-stone front, the "ornate" public building, etc., the better. "His name was Dennis," says one of the talkers in Kipling's "Conference of the Powers," when tactless inquiry is made as to some incompetent, "and we'll let it stay so." All that we need note at this point is that when the new men arose, the leaders to whom in one way or another we owe our present status in architecture, they were offered a clean sheet of paper. The horrors around them were, perhaps, not unhelpful either, for at least they showed the adventurers in strange seas what to avoid.

I

H. H. RICHARDSON

They were contemporaries, the architects with whom I am here specially concerned, and hence there is no strict chronological sequence in which to view them; but in the matter of influence for good or for ill, of the broad relation of each man in the group to their common period of architectural history, we may safely range them in a certain order, beginning with Henry Hobson Richardson. Born in 1839, he was a younger man, younger by ten years or more, than Hunt, but his course was run quicker and earlier than was that of his friend; and when I say this I am glancing not so much at the date of his untimely death, 1886, as at the curiously swift and circumscribed nature of his rule. It was a rule, while it lasted. There was a time when Richardson's vogue was tremendous. The man himself was robust and inspiriting, a type of bold, affirmative force; his loyal disciples "backed" him not only for what he did but for what he was. La Farge, who used to visit him in old days at his home on Staten Island, before he had "arrived" with his design for Trinity Church and had made his definitive removal to Boston, told me of his ample ways. "Like many other great men he was a mighty eater and drinker—a pitcher of milk, a pitcher of champagne, a pitcher of water—everything was done on a large

scale and his work is of that kind." A Southerner by birth, he began life in New Orleans, but he was educated at Harvard and on his graduation proceeded to Paris, where he entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts and fitted himself for the architectural profession.

In one of the letters of this formative period, printed by Mrs. Van Rensselaer in her biography of Richardson, there is a brief, arresting sentence. "To Athens and Rome I must go, *coûte que coûte*," he exclaims. Curiosity is piqued, but as a matter of fact whether he went or not is beside the point. The interesting thing is that he came back to America in 1862 neither the Renaissance man that he might have been made by the one journey nor the classicist that he might have been made by the other. Nor had the Ecole made him an Academician. His first commission, the Church of the Unity in Springfield, was an essay in English Gothic! That was built in 1866. Within three or four years he was designing the Brattle Square Church, in Boston, and modelling its tall tower on an Italian campanile of the earlier type. Other instances might be cited to show an eclectic tendency. But even at this period, in the early seventies, he was feeling his way toward the idiom which was ultimately to distinguish him and when he attacked the problem offered in the competition for Trinity Church, he had this idiom sufficiently under control to use it with a flourish. The Gothic influence persisted, but the Romanesque prevailed. Later

he was to develop still another manner but his genius was at bottom Romanesque, and so it stayed until he died. It is with the Richardson of Trinity Church that we have to reckon in the perspective of our subject.

There is a great building lying about in it, a masterpiece struggling to be born. The huge central tower, so strongly reminiscent of Salamanca, would alone challenge interest and admiration. Perhaps it is in its too proud predominance that we have a clew to Richardson's predestined failure as a lasting influence. It marks him the creator of the fine episode rather than of the organic, full-rounded, great design. But I think there is a more conclusive explanation of the fact that most if not all of the enthusiasm he once excited has gone down the wind. Passionately as he cared for his warm Southern inspiration, profoundly as he studied it, he was nevertheless on the wrong track. While admirers everywhere cheered him on, while clients testified to the faith that was in them by storming him with commissions, while pupils drank in his stirring gospel and presently went forth to practise in offices of their own what he had preached, no one fallen under the Richardsonian spell took account of the little disintegrating force even then working at its centre. This was the too exotic nature of the architect's inspiration. All our styles have been brought from overseas, but this one, I think, was the hardest to acclimatize, the one most alien to

the genius of the country. When we are flamboyant we are prone to be shrill. Our fervor does not visit us in a vague, cloudy, solemn way—it flickers. There are no mysterious reverberations about our artistic romanticism. When we are at our worst our utterance is thin and hard. When we are at our best we are above all things glittering and lucid. There, I believe, is the significant element, a certain sharp, sane, and perhaps somewhat prosaic lucidity which goes with our very blood and tells in our style. And because Richardson quarrelled with it, without having the last imperious power to put a spiritually incongruous, unwelcome inspiration in its place, he remained at the height of his fame, and still remains, a kind of exotic, a mistaken interpreter of his time and his opportunity, a great artist *manqué*.

In expressing himself, or perhaps I should say in expressing a misdirected zest, he pleased himself, and, by the same token, countless others. But you get some idea of his irrelevance and thereby of his failure when you note, for example, his resemblance to a painter like Watts, the English idealist who tried to recapture the grand manner of the old Italians and did great work, leaving a great name, but without convincing us that either belongs amongst the things that really endure. Both men tried to pull themselves up by their boot-straps. It can't be done. Full-bodied romance like Richardson's needs an older, more composite, more generous soil than ours. Trin-

ity is a magnificent effort, but it shows the strain. I may risk an appeal to another art. "For poetry," says Matthew Arnold, "the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion." Richardson had the idea; but the illusion escaped him; and to architecture such as he strove to make the illusion is indispensable. His art needs depth, warmth, color, and an atmosphere both of ebullient tangible life and of shadowy, even mystical, beauties. It needs illusion, charm. Trinity is stark, muscle-bound, one of the coldest piles in architecture anywhere. Richardson had weight, too much weight. For the burgeoning grace of Romanesque, which enchants even while it gravely impresses, he was heavy-handed. The best monuments to his genius, though not the most characteristic of his ambition, or, unfortunately, the most fertile in influence, are those later public buildings, like the City Hall at Albany and the Court House and Jail at Pittsburg, in which his exuberance is tamed, his style is simplified, and he comes back to plain prose. That, too, he overdid. "A pitcher of milk, a pitcher of champagne, etc." He would make a warehouse, or, for that matter, a private dwelling, look like a fortress. Whenever he was content to be simple he had, to be sure, his reward. The Richardson who built Sever Hall at Harvard and certain modest libraries and railroad stations in New England will be not ungratefully remembered. Neither, on the other hand, will he be lauded as he once was lauded,

and the imitation of him which raged for a time is unlikely ever to be revived.

And yet his place as one of our leaders is secure, for reasons highly germane to the present inquiry. Richardson's work, diverging from the permanent channel of American art and carrying us for a while into a sort of backwater, nevertheless was allied to a pure stream of ideas and made for a fine standard. He helped to abolish a meretricious *régime*. He made buildings which if not perfect or in harmony with the true spirit of the age still called men to a higher plane of æsthetics. He cleansed taste. Through him architecture was brought nearer to re-establishment as an art. What he did reacted upon the minds of laymen and architects alike, waking new and nobler desires, stimulating new and more intelligent ambitions. His energy reached far. He communicated precious elements of life to a movement needing just the burly impetus that he was qualified to give it. It was his misfortune, not his fault, that he encouraged exoticism, redundancy, and an inexpressive, florid kind of swagger, at a time when the one thing we needed was discipline.

II

RICHARD MORRIS HUNT

Richardson's magnificent sincerity and the sheer creative ability of the man gave an astonishing weight to his influence, and there can be no doubt at all that if this had remained unchallenged he might have imposed the *tour de force* upon us, as the popular solution of our architectural problems, for a number of years on which it is distinctly uncomfortable to reflect. The challenge was to come, however, from at least two powerful quarters, and in both instances it was to drive at that weak point in his armor upon which I have laid stress. Strengthened by European precedent, it was nevertheless to make clear that not everything in Europe is suited to our conditions, that there are traditions infinitely more to our purpose than the Romanesque. Of McKim's pure style I shall speak later. It worked mighty changes when it came fully into play. But before then Hunt was quietly doing much to redress the balance, and he was doing it because the difference between him and Richardson went to the root of the matter. Richardson was an absolutely idiosyncratic type, a man whose individuality would not down. Hunt abandoned the personal bias at the outset of his career. He was from first to last an academic artist, rich in character, in strength of temperament, but scholastic to the

core. To any one who meditates on the progress of architecture in America at the crucial period of which I speak it is fascinating to watch the two influences working side by side, and to see in the longer survival of Hunt's another proof of the cosmopolitan, eclectic nature of our art. Richardson's style was too personal to himself to be communicable, and so it bred only ephemeral imitation. Hunt was all for abstract principles, and these he could and did teach to his countrymen. He did not make them mould their styles on his. But he drilled them in the logic of architecture, in its rectitude, in those elements of it which are independent of temperament and might even be described as independent of time and place. In the light of these ideas he looms as one of the most remarkable artists of his time.

One link he had with Richardson, the dominating, enkindling power of the master, and I cannot forbear pausing for a moment on the personality of this famous leader as I used to know him. As a man Richard Morris Hunt was the antithesis of his architectural self. He was a picturesque figure, stalwart for his inches (he was not tall), and with something in his carriage as well as in his manner of speech that made you suspect the military officer rather than the artist. His head was handsome; it conveyed even an impression of stateliness, at times, under the gray hair. But the air of stateliness was fleeting. In the main, Hunt was prodigiously vivacious, almost a French-

man in some of his quick passages of talk, and the talk itself was explosive. He liked pungency and never failed to introduce it into his discourse, no matter what the occasion. At a public dinner, no less than in private conversation, he was fond of accentuating what he had to say with that tempestuous rhetoric in which old Mr. Hardcastle indulged, and yet there was no sting of wrath in Hunt's fiery speech. If he damned a thing he did it genially, and with a touch of humor that somehow made the objurgation seem almost a form of approval. He would grow apocalyptic sometimes, piling up his denunciation in heroic masses; but all the time there was the twinkle in the eye that prepared you for the harmless conclusion, and it was usually odds that you would burst into laughter with the crash of the wordy climax. And Hunt laughed with you. He was helpful and sympathetic by nature. To the veriest stranger he was accessible and cordial so soon as he saw that his interlocutor was seriously interested in the question at issue. For in the great question for him, in the question of architecture, his own interest was inexhaustible.

As a man he was impulsive, quick-tempered, ebullient, picturesque always. As an architect this unflagging enthusiast, fighting always for what he believed to be the best, could do nothing hasty or ill-considered. The study which engrossed his life was begun when he was only fifteen. At that age he left Bos-

ton, where he had been pursuing his education in the High School and the Latin School, and went with his mother to Europe. She took him to Geneva, where in 1843 he entered the architectural *atelier* of Samuel Darier. From Geneva he proceeded to Paris and continued his studies. Hector Lefuel was his master. Hunt studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts for some time and then went off to Egypt and Asia Minor. Returning to Paris in 1854 he was made Inspecteur des Travaux by the Government, the appointment directing his energies upon the construction of those new buildings which connected the Tuileries with the Louvre. Lefuel was in charge of this work and he gave Hunt the Pavillon de la Bibliothèque for his province. It meant priceless experience to him. It gave him practical training in exactly the school which pleased him most—the French school of academic architecture, a school in which splendor, and a certain monumental dignity, are the indispensable ingredients of style.

When Hunt was engaged upon the Louvre he was still in his twenties. In fact he was only twenty-seven when he returned to America, with a foreign experience behind him probably unique in the annals of our school. His powers were soon recognized. He had scarcely settled here before he was invited to share in the completion of the Capitol at Washington. He served for six months as assistant to Thomas U. Walter, the architect in charge, and then returned to

New York to found the practice which he carried on to the day of his death in 1895. He established himself also as the master of an office — in Paris it would have been called an *atelier* — to which the young architects of the country were eager to gain admittance. It was at this time that his influence was perhaps most definite and potent. He drew any number of clever men to his side, and, while no one of the group copied his style, they were all immensely benefited by the sound principles he taught. These were, that architecture to be good must be good in construction, that every factor in a design must be in its proper place; that the architect must be above all things moderate, respectful of well-ascertained rules, true to the golden mean of taste marking the school from which Hunt came. A building with him was a problem to be solved with strict reference to the necessities of the situation, and with even stricter reference to laws of proportion, of balance. In a word, he was healthily academic. His genius was not creative and he did not strike out on a new line, but he was brimming over with vitality; there was nothing crassly conservative about him, and he kept his work within almost severe bounds without ever making it barren or coldly conventional. Richardson triumphed over Hunt in the Trinity competition, but the loser there won elsewhere a longer and a truer victory. His tonic influence, keyed perfectly to the American spirit, was of incalculable value in counteracting the spread of that

Romanesque fallacy whose ravages we have considered. And he proved, too, what it was important to know, that the classical tradition, filtered through the French, was not incompatible with artistic freedom.

How far Hunt could go in the direction of mere picturesque charm, for example, when he chose, in the direction of mere elegance and sensuous beauty, he showed in the house for Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-second Street in New York. It is perhaps less characteristic of him than many other designs which might be cited. It is *his* tour de force, and its revival of old French motives in the environment fixed for it may seem open to question. But it is an enchanting revival, standing alone in all America. There has never been anything to equal it here for grace, for exquisite finish, for a daintiness reminding us of some French château with its romantic background rather than of Fifth Avenue. It has often been said that the house needed a park around it. This is very true. It would be greatly enhanced by slight distance, by avenues of trees and by adequate terracing. But just as it is it is a brilliant performance. The outlines are ravishingly picturesque. The ornamentation comes as near to being lace-work in stone as architectural decoration has a right to come. And for a fairly princely effect, for the suggestion of that organized, highly wrought luxury which we associate with European social life, the

spacious portal has always seemed to me an achievement by itself. Hunt was possibly aware that he had produced a masterpiece in this building, that he had done something in the glittering casket of pinnacles and fretwork which neither he nor any one else in America would surpass, or even rival. He had, for once at least, been a poet as well as an architect, and he caused himself to be represented in stone upon the roof of the house. You may see the statue there any day as you pass along Fifth Avenue, a little figure clothed as an artisan. It is a pleasant conceit, and one which fits the building as it would have fitted no other designed by Hunt. The French château which he built for Mr. George Vanderbilt in the South has advantages which this city house lacks, a beautiful site and unlimited free space around it. But that design is not, to my mind, half so sympathetic as its urban predecessor.

The difference is significant, reviving that question of personality to which I have more than once referred. Hunt's instinct was always for restraint, for a subordination of personal feeling to reasoned principle. Turn from the W. K. Vanderbilt house to the J. J. Astor house in Fifth Avenue, facing the Park, and the Gerry house near by. There is less charm in them than in the miniature château. But they are admirable illustrations of what can be done for American architecture with French ideas, when these are employed as ideas and not as mechanical formulæ.

They make for clearly articulated and interesting design, for a well-bred elegance, for a quality which may not be startlingly original but is neither, on the other hand, mediocre nor colorless. Hunt's predilections made him, on the whole, more successful with city houses than with country dwellings and, in fact, the best things he did in country architecture, apart from the Southern château just mentioned, were modifications of his accustomed style. The Cornelius Vanderbilt house at Newport presents more than a modification. It was really based on the buildings of the Italian Renaissance in many of its most important features. But even here the design is brought together under the influence of a spirit closely related to Hunt's earliest training. You can tell in a moment that the designer of this work was taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. There are indications of it in the grouping, in the massing of the different parts. Working toward the close of his career Hunt may have tried to move freely in the style of the Renaissance, but he could not quite cast off the academic mode he had been following for years.

Better than either his city houses or his country houses were Hunt's public buildings. There the old worker on the Louvre came back to the problems that interested him most and that were worthiest of his faculties. The Lenox Library, swept not so long ago by the march of time from its beautiful site opposite the Park in New York, had no charm at all;

but it was never meant to have any, and at the risk of seeming to labor the point I must reiterate that just here we come again upon this architect's shining virtue. The Lenox Library, repellent as it was, was also superbly sound, a piece of rigorous scholarship. I used to shiver before its bleakness, but I used to rejoice in its finality—at the sureness and repose discernible in its unified proportions. It had the grandeur of some ancient monolith. In its majestic simplicity it read American architects an unforgettable lesson. And at this point it is delightful to recur to Hunt's flexibility, his demonstration of the fact that that discipline which he had himself obeyed and loved to impose meant no handicap whatever to the true architect. I would cite now the Administration Building at the World's Fair at Chicago, wherein he struck the note that was peculiarly his, the grandiose note of a kind of formal magnificence, of academic and official dignity. There was no building at the fair more precisely adapted to its position and purposes, more perfect in its field, than the splendid structure at the entrance to the grounds. It was brilliant, as befitted the place and the occasion, but it was also designed with the right formality. It was as picturesque as could have been desired, yet it was obviously academic. Its proportions were good, its details were good, it fell judiciously into its given space, and yet it dominated, as was intended, everything that surrounded it. Hunt did much for the

artistic side of the fair. His energy flowed everywhere and was of endless service to the army of workers concentrated in Jackson Park. But his best service was rendered in showing how a public building could be designed with originality and yet with reserve; independently, and yet in a sort of worldly-wise taste; with an American vivacity in its outline, and yet with a dignity that makes even the most festal of buildings impressive. It was this building, coming near the end of a career which had throughout been fruitful of fine results, that brought Hunt the gold medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, an honor conferred by the Queen through the great professional society of England and regarded as one of the chief prizes of architectural merit in the world. He was always being thus recognized by the professional bodies of his own country and of Europe, and not simply because he had designed this or that good building but because the wholesomeness of his broad influence came more and more to be realized. His genius worked like a leaven, the leaven of wise authority. In his work men could see the virtue of careful, impersonal training; from it they could infer the absolute necessity of some ordered principles to the development of a work of art with consistency as well as with flexibility. Richardson heightened our architectural enthusiasm. Hunt did much to chasten and organize it.

III

CHARLES F. McKIM

As we have seen, it was not so very long ago, as years are counted, that our architecture was flung into the melting-pot, but the moment now seems historical. The artist in building was coming into his own. It was good to be alive and in the midst of tremendous changes, which seemed none the less tremendous because the public at large was hardly aware of what was going on. I was there, in my youth, and I know. Architecture was more important than any other human interest, and in New York at all events it was tempting to believe that its fortunes for the entire country were largely in the hands of one group of men. Everybody knew and honored the two pioneers whose careers I have sketched, and everybody knew that certain other brilliant men were at work. There was, for instance, a memorable stir when Babb, Cook and Willard built a warehouse in Duane Street placing a new and beautiful stamp upon commercial architecture. But the rising tide was dominated by one firm, that formed when Charles F. McKim, William Rutherford Mead, and Stanford White settled down in the later seventies to work in harness. They were foreordained to be associated together, each contributing something that the others lacked, while all three moved naturally to a common end. Young

men of talent, many of whom now occupy commanding positions in their profession, came trooping into the old office, which was an office in name but had the character of a studio. The first of our modern skyscrapers, a modest enough affair, had just gone up on lower Broadway, but problems of steel construction then gave little if any concern to McKim and his followers. If they had dealings with engineers, their associations were more intimate with painters and sculptors, and the men in the allied professions who were part of their circle were men like La Farge and Saint-Gaudens. The artistic temperament, pure and simple, had everything its own way. The important thing was just to make a building beautiful. It was inspiring to observe the manner in which McKim showed how this was to be done. The task of exhibiting the play of his influence is a little difficult, but it is full of interest.

In a work of collaboration, two or more men may so skilfully fuse their identities as to puzzle even themselves, to say nothing of the public; but sooner or later the world comes to know just what each brought to the study of a given problem. Character will out. You cannot hide individual genius behind a firm name. In discussion of the buildings designed by McKim, Mead and White, it has been customary to recognize the exceptional unity of that partnership, and to leave unanswered the question as to which one of the three may have determined this or

that element in the style practised by them all. Reserve in the matter has been very natural. An analysis of their work which seeks to carry the inquiry thus far soon threatens to entangle the critic in a classification of specific buildings, and that is not only intrusive but full of peril. For example, the faculty of Stanford White was romantic, and even playful. He had some of the gifts of the painter, as certain brilliant drawings of his attest, and he would have been a painter if La Farge, to whom he went for advice on the subject, had not urged him to be an architect instead. But White, who could be decorative to the point of the rococo, could also express himself in the purest, most classical, of architectural terms. I remember a talk with him about the fine cornice of the Tiffany building, in which the point of view he disclosed was that of an architect engaged upon a positively austere conception. It is idle, then, to attempt to parcel out the achievements of the firm. On the other hand, it would be equally foolish, in speaking of McKim, to evade the detachment of his personality from the working scheme to which he contributed so much. To any one familiar with the subject he must remain as clearly defined a figure in our architecture as any of the leaders in our sculpture or painting.

An artist in the strictest sense of the term, an artist of fresh and original traits, he was also a type of intellect driving at beauty, and deep re-

flection went to the making of his work. His principles were thought out, not emotionally improvised. They started with the organic character of a building, whose functions were to find not only charming but right expression. Thus he never did anything merely for effect; his façades might be never so original but you would recognize always their absolute fitness. His buildings unmistakably belonged to their sites. This fact has been obscured for some commentators by the not infrequent modelling of one of those buildings upon some historic European monument. Argument has gone off at a tangent, confusing the question of policy involved with the question of the artist's pure constructive purpose. Ignore for a moment this matter of the adaptation of foreign designs and look simply to the inquiry as to whether McKim did not work out his problem from the centre, giving his buildings an ineffaceable stamp eloquent of their purpose. I cheerfully make the reader a present of the fact that more than once in the great mass of work to be considered he is bound to come across a design frankly taken from the past. The debts thus to be discovered leave McKim wholly solvent. His occasional reproduction of particular models did not conflict with a vital fashion of handling practical issues. His genius worked in the stuff of American life. He took our social and civic needs into his mind and proceeded to satisfy them, not as a dilettante erecting handsome screens upon the high-

way but as a creative builder, and, in the process of leaving a library or a church, a clubhouse or a State capitol, a building with a soul, he framed for us something like a new architectural language.

He could do this, for one reason, because he began at the beginning. He was never one of those designers content to rest satisfied with work of the sort that merely looks well on paper. Building materials were to him what pigments are to the painter; he handled them with the same intensely personal feeling for their essential qualities that a great technician of the brush brings to the manipulation of his colors, and he left upon his productions the same autographic stamp. Stanford White had no keener passion for the effectiveness, as decoration, of a rich Flemish tapestry or a twisted and gilded old Spanish column, than McKim had for the structural character of a well-laid course of stone. I recall an incident typical of his solicitude for material, for the effect of an idea embodied in the disposition of just so much substance. It was at the time of the building of the Boston Public Library. Certain sheets of marble were to be put up in the entrance-hall — Numidian, I think they were — and their dimensions were determined by McKim with the utmost care. He regarded those dimensions as essential to the ensemble, but when the marble was delivered it was found that they had not been rigidly followed. Forthwith the sheets were rejected. The contractor argued at tre-

mendous length and almost wept, but McKim was harder than the Numidian itself. He was dealing in marble, I repeat, as an artist deals in paint, and he would no more submit to a change in the appearance of the surfaces he had planned than a painter would allow his color-man to dictate the final condition of his picture. The joints were to come where he wanted them. I make much of this episode because it stands for temperament, for an inborn gift. You cannot learn fastidiousness like that. The right dimensions of a piece of material for a given position in a building can no more be figured up and communicated by a pedagogue than the secrets of color and texture, to be similarly applied, can be formulated in the schools. To think of McKim is to think of a genius expressing itself through the stuff of architecture as creative genius expresses itself in all the other arts, somehow identifying itself with the very grain and fibre of that in which it works.

The instinctive character of McKim's gift comes out in the earliest pages of his biography. When, as a lad of nineteen, he began his professional studies at Harvard, in 1866, the drift of his artistic nature would appear to have been fixed. It was, in the strict sense, a constructive gift. They say that he could draw even then with uncommon facility, but I have never heard of his having passed through that sketch-book stage in which a young architect is betrayed into bizarre performances by the ease with

which he can use his pencil in Europe and bring back scores of supposedly adaptable "motives." Later in life, when he came to give much thought to the training of his juniors, he was wont to enforce upon them the excellence of the Ecole des Beaux Arts as a source of instruction — and to warn them against its dangers as a source of patterns. He had been there himself and knew what he was talking about. Leaving Harvard for Paris he entered the Ecole and stayed three years, but if its lessons had imposed any pedantic rules upon him his subsequent travels in Europe and his innate tendencies amply protected him from returning to America with a cut-and-dried hypothesis for the solution of his problems.

In the formation of his own style it was by the spirit, not the letter, of the old law that he allowed himself to be controlled, and this it was that he developed in himself, and poured into the work of his firm. He developed it slowly, and very thoughtfully. He did not learn the value of the Italian Renaissance as one learns a lesson, but gradually absorbed it as he absorbed classical ideas and some French influences. Little by little he came to do his work in a kind of dry light, steadily getting rid of all that was superfluous in detail, steadily expressing himself in larger and simpler terms. He used the style of the Renaissance just as the late J. F. Bentley used that of Byzantium, when he designed perhaps the most remarkable piece of pure architecture in our epoch,

the superb Roman Catholic cathedral in London. He used it, that is to say, as an instrument which he had made entirely his own. That accounts for the reaction of his work upon his "young men" and upon the work of many of his contemporaries. He was effective in this way, because he handed on no academic axioms, but a habit of mind. When he realized the dream of his life and founded the American Academy at Rome it was not to substitute an Italian for a French formula, but to lead the young student, almost insensibly, into a nobler, more disciplined, and yet freer way of thinking and working. Thus he himself thought and worked, a steadying force in American art. If he had a genius for rule and hence waxed in severity as he progressed, he had also a genius for beauty and hence never ceased to charm. That was what his disciples felt, and it was through that that he helped them. It was once my privilege to go with him through the sculpture galleries of the Vatican, making notes of the statues that seemed suitable for a decorative plan then in the air. There had been talk of reproducing a quantity of classical sculpture in plaster casts, to be distributed through the grounds of the Chicago Fair, and together we prepared a long list. The experience was one to remember with gratitude. McKim saw those sculptured episodes, as he intended them to be, in all their possible relations. If he accepted or rejected a suggestion, his comments bore partly upon the intrinsic

qualities of the statue, but more upon its probable effect against the background at Chicago. He would pause before some piece, and in a few words explain its fitness or its uselessness. I vividly remember how the man at whose feet I sat enlarged my horizon, and put the whole question of sculptural decoration into a new perspective.

When in his early manhood he came back to his own land to make a career he worked for a time under Richardson, and I know no better testimony to his artistic poise than you may find in his emergence unscathed from the influence of that brilliant man.* Sometimes it has seemed surprising to me that he was not, at least in his formative years, brought more under subjection to the designer of Trinity. Yet, on a moment's reflection, one always remembers the importance of sheer taste in the history of the three partners and how much this matter meant to McKim. Naturally he swerved aside from the broad and luxuriant path along which Richardson

* It is interesting, by the way, to compare the Higginson and Whittier houses built side by side in Beacon Street, years ago, respectively by Richardson and by McKim's firm, the latter then in its first "period." The two designs were produced in the most amicable rivalry. It was intended that they should harmonize. Unquestionably they go well together. Obviously, too, both are the work of artists. Let us not look for elements of superiority in either the one or the other. But in looking for the points of difference, and this is surely legitimate, may we not note that the Whittier design is much lighter in hand than its neighbor, that the makers of it were willing to leave a certain weightiness to Richardson, preferring grace, elegance, and a delicate linear charm? All that was very characteristic of McKim.

moved at such a generous gait. If we imagine a Whistler sojourning for a little while, interestedly enough, in the atelier of a Rubens, but presently going forth to develop, as a matter of course, a totally different style of his own, we can form a fair working idea of what McKim did when he and White and Mead set about making their mark. To say that they began to make it with a kind of cleverness would be to understate the case, and at the same time there is something justly descriptive in the phrase. Certainly there is no occasion for critical solemnities on the buildings through which they felt their way toward a style of their own. I am thinking especially of things like the Casino at Newport and divers cottages that they built there in the '80's. I am thinking, too, of the little music hall at Short Hills in New Jersey, which I used to see at the end of a long walk every Sunday one summer. There was positive refreshment in coming upon that modest bit of country architecture; it was so original, so picturesque, and, withal, so perfectly adapted to its site. You saw at once that here was a new conception of what needed to be done with an old problem, a new art in place of an old sort of journeyman's craft. The novelty sprang, of course, from the brains of McKim and his colleagues, but it is, perhaps, worth while to note here another quarter whence the new movement got part of its impetus.

Very little, if anything, has been said about the

social developments which synchronized with the early progress of this firm. It is in no uncomplimentary sense that they may be described as the fashionable architects of their time. On the contrary, the designation is to be employed in all seriousness and honor. It was their good fortune to come upon the scene just at a time when people of wealth were taking a new interest in the beautification of their environment. Private collections of pictures and other works of art were not only increasing in number, but were being formed with reference to higher critical standards. In the furnishing of houses a more lavish expenditure was accompanied by a desire for a better scheme of decoration. Modes of social entertainment grew richer and more complicated as they grew more costly. It is flattering to our self-esteem to believe that we were always at home in palaces, but, as a matter of fact, the splendors of American social life date from the last quarter of a century, an educational period if ever there was one. At Newport and elsewhere a type of dwelling was in demand such as had not got itself created since long before the war. Moreover, prior to the sixties, North or South, the owner of a prosperous house let himself go chiefly in respect to scale, and while his taste at the best aimed in the safe direction of simplicity he gave little thought to art as art. McKim's clients were quite willing that he should think of nothing else. There, I venture to say, you

have the secret of his opportunity and one key to what he made of it. Men of means wanted new houses and were as keen on having these made beautiful and distinguished as though they were acquiring the paintings and sculptures of foreign masters. The Casino at Newport is possibly the most representative of the country buildings erected by McKim, Mead and White, at this period. It is representative alike in its fitness for the purpose to which it was assigned and in what I can only describe as its restrained picturesqueness. In breaking with a tradition of dulness the firm did not consider it necessary to turn violent or bizarre. Nothing could be fresher, more unconventional, than this Casino, or the house for Robert Goelet at Newport, or the Osborne house at Mamaroneck; but then, on the other hand, nothing could be more judiciously studied, more refined, more delicately expressive of a luxurious but beautiful ideal. What McKim did in the country he did in the city, in such houses as the one for Mr. Whittier, which I have already cited, or those for Mr. Drayton, Mr. Cutting, and Mr. Phoenix in New York. He succeeded in the difficult task of blending dignity and repose with a certain piquancy. A design framed by him and his partners was always a serious work of art, and it was always amusing, to use the word with the implication it carries in French criticism. Decidedly McKim, Mead and White were the architects for an expanding social era, as were those mas-

ters who built the city palaces and country villas of the rich Romans and Florentines of the Renaissance.

If they had stopped there they would still be remembered, but they were bound to press further and win a wider fame — bound both by the conditions of American life and by the nature of their resources. Everything conspired to lead them on from architecture that was charming to architecture that was monumental, and, on occasion, in the grand style. Here, I think, is where we cannot but recognize the steadily ripening influence of McKim. The genius that was so easily and so happily exercised upon the problems of dwelling-houses in city and country inevitably craved a larger outlet. The firm has for years gone on designing private houses, but it is significant that most of these have latterly been very stately affairs, on an imposing scale. The essential history of McKim is to be traced in a long succession of heroic buildings, starting with the Villard block in New York and the Public Library in Boston, and coming down to the Pennsylvania Station in New York. In the contemplation of these edifices we abandon all thought of those "amusing" qualities to which I have alluded, and think of graver things; but before touching upon the purely monumental aspects of McKim's work I must glance again, in passing, at that *flair* of his for materials and at a friendly, intimate quality which he carried from his earlier experience on into larger fields. As he at-

tacked more ambitious themes he did not lose touch with the sentiment of the life around him, sacrificing personal feeling to scholarship. To see how tactfully, how sympathetically he could deal with subjects apart from ordinary private life and yet untouched by the heavy hand that governs the purposes of the average public building, one has but to look at such things as the Harvard Club in New York, the Harvard Gates at Cambridge, the big building for the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, the Women's Building for the University of Illinois at Urbana and the buildings for the Army War College at Washington. In the first place, the work done in these designs shows invariably with what judgment and taste McKim could use brick, when he chose, a material for which the firm long ago declared its effective appreciation. (The vast château-like house, built for Mr. C. L. Tiffany in New York, when the firm was coming into repute, is alone impressive evidence of a truly artistic faculty for the treatment of this material.) Furthermore, the buildings I have named and the gates at Cambridge are remarkable for their possession of a dignity that is not too austere. You are impressed but you are not overpowered. Something gracious and even beguiling appeals to you through the very serious scheme of design that is in each instance worked out.

McKim knew how to take a high view of his subject. He did not know how to be harsh or bleak.

Was it not just his gift for beauty that kept him thus on the warm, human side of things, the same joyously creative impulse that had caused him to play so ingeniously with the little fabrics the firm put together at Newport? By all the rules of the Academy a style so pure as his should have culminated at a point spelling mere coldness for the ordinary observer, but McKim had a way of softening his severities when he felt that it was required. See how he modified the rather gaunt lines of the Italian palace he built for the University Club in New York by the decorative touches which balconies and carven seals give to the façades. I remember, too, the brilliant New York State Building at the Chicago Fair in 1893. He made it a better building, a better piece of pure architecture, than the Villa Medicis at Rome, on which he modelled it. But what made it so extraordinarily successful was nothing more nor less than the festal urbanity with which he tempered the majestic character of the design. The building was unmistakably monumental, but it was a cheerful, welcoming structure, fitting with absolute precision into the holiday picture made by the exposition at large. We know how devotedly he and his numerous associates in the great undertaking at Chicago strove to preserve a classical sobriety amongst the main exposition buildings, how earnest they were in their plans for a really noble sky-line, and, in short, how one of the most popular of modern demonstra-

tions was charged with an artistic lesson. No one there was more exacting than was McKim, no one there was more steadfast in the advocacy of a lofty architectural standard. But no one, I may add, was a subtler adept in the process of enveloping serious ideas in garments of winning loveliness.

At the bottom of all his studies was not only that gift for beauty which I have mentioned, but a profound conviction of the place of character in architecture. The purpose of a building, the use to which it was destined, was something more than a practical condition enforced upon him by a client; it was an appeal to his imagination, stimulating his powers of design just as a proposal for a statue will set a sculptor's fingers tingling to press the clay. McKim was not, any more than any other great artist, infallible, and he had to learn some things by experience. The Public Library in Boston has been criticised as falling short of perfection in respect to its utilitarian function. Perhaps it is not impeccable. I confess that while I was in and out of it frequently at the time of its erection, and have since explored it more than once, I have never gone broodingly about the testing of its every corner. It is possible, no doubt, that there are rooms in which the reader might wish for a little better light. But, when all is said, where, in this country, will you find a nobler library building, a nobler library building of the same scale and put to the same popular uses? I

know that McKim and his partners gave unending study to the problem, and I can see him in Rome, years ago, poring over its monuments as one turns the pages of a book, looking for further inspiration. He had one of his draughtsmen with him, on whom he would call to sketch one detail or another that interested him. Was it in order that he might slavishly reproduce that detail? Not for a moment. It was rather as though he were yielding himself to the play of ideas as he interrogated the old masters, and wanted to jot down suggestive points developed in the process. These were not so much co-ordinated with his central scheme as they were subtly absorbed into it, to fertilize and enrich it. He was a striking instance of the artist who consults the past for a kind of broad invigoration, never as a methodical copyist.

In the presence of buildings like the one at Boston, or the State-House at Providence, or the Pennsylvania Station in New York, or Mr. Morgan's inimitable little library, the student feels that he is down to the bed-rock of pure architecture. Nothing experimental is visible, you find nothing irrelevant, nothing that is understated or overdone. The bones of the design, so to say, are faultlessly articulated, faultlessly with reference to the practical idea at the heart of the problem, and to this unit of construction there is given an envelope of beautiful simplicity. If there is decoration to be reckoned with you scarcely

notice it; it is made part and parcel of the mass with such unerring taste. What you notice above all is the achievement of something like grandeur with a singularly elastic touch. Take, for example, the pillared façades of the Pennsylvania Station. For a positively Roman weight and majesty it would be impossible to beat that building in modern architecture. But neither could you find it anywhere surpassed for a beauty that I can perhaps best indicate as a beauty brimming over with nervous force, really vitalized, as though the thing which we call style were fairly singing in stone. The march of those columns is superb, luring the eye until it forgets the immobility of walls, cornices, and so on, and is lost in sensuous delight. It is a huge structure, and, for the mind sensitive to the great pageant of our material progress, it is fraught with ideas of tremendous and even ruthless power. After all, a building like this is symbolical of one of the forces of our national life, and a poet might reasonably linger before it, presently translating into words the thought it raises of an irresistible might. But the right poet would turn what is severe and terrible about such a concentration of energy into terms of pure beauty, and this is what has been done by the genius of architecture directed upon so seemingly prosaic a thing as a vast railway station. The building is true in its very essence to the railway's need. It is also supremely beautiful.

We think in large terms in this country. Our area is immense, our population is enormous; politically,

socially, and in our industrial relations we are incessantly affected by the unprecedented width of our horizon. It is a commonplace of satirical criticism that "bigness" is an American foible. Neither the painter nor the sculptor is ordinarily required to come to close quarters with that foible. The architect alone is forever confronted by it, and therefore exposed to a cruel temptation. McKim mastered it. He liked, I think, to tackle heroic issues. In the latter part of his career he threw himself with gusto upon the solution of problems like the one presented in the Pennsylvania Station. His genius had an even more extensive range, as one may gather from the share he took in the evolution of the scheme for the beautifying of the city of Washington. Who could have blamed him if, in the prosecution of campaigns so portentous in scope, he had completely lost sight of those ideals of exquisiteness, of charm, of delicately fervid art, with which he had begun his work? He never lost sight of them but went on, as the years passed, rising to greater opportunities with increasing firmness of grasp and with increasing feeling for beauty. He was always a builder in the truest, manliest sense of the term, and he was always an artist. It is in this dual character that McKim remains a shining figure in our annals.

I have tried to portray him in relation to his time and especially to the friendly rivalry in which he and his colleagues were involved with Richardson and

Hunt. These men overshadow practically all the others on the stage. But before passing to the one conspicuous exception, the one who played in his way a part equally effective, I have to speak of a man of genius unknown to the outer world and, indeed, no more familiar to many of the younger generation in his profession. This was Joseph M. Wells, who died more than twenty years ago. He was a quiet, meditative man, too shy in his demeanor to strike one as being eccentric and yet with something about him of the odd individuality which that epithet connotes. There is a remarkable portrait of him painted by his friend Dewing, a portrait of really extraordinary interest because of its interpretation of exceptionally subtle traits. Wells was a bundle of subtleties — and of contrasts. I remember his lending me two first editions; one was of "The Vision of Judgment," the other of "The Rose and the Ring." The collocation of Byron in his bitterest mood and Thackeray in his sweetest was just the paradox to expect in Wells. At one moment his cynical humor would vent itself in a saying rendered doubly mordant by the *malin* chuckle going with it. And in the next, as I knew from many an occasion when we went to hear music together, he would talk about Beethoven, his idol, with a grave enthusiasm and a sympathy indicative only of the loftiest feeling. He had the reflective, critical mind. His life was an intellectual revery.

Such a man made an ideal coadjutor for McKim and White, confirming, clarifying, and extending the austerer inspiration of the one, aiding while restraining the impulses of the other. That he exercised this half-admonitory, collaborative function in their office, those two liberal artists would have been the first to admit. They loved him for his strange, hermit-like self. They admired and deeply respected him for his unique abilities. He adored Bramante and I have often wondered what he would have said to the research which has endeavored to deprive that master of some of his noblest triumphs. Wells had tacked up on the wall above his draughting-table a big photograph of the court of the Cancelleria, and sometimes he would take it as his text when he discoursed to me in his short, halting sentences on the sanctities of architecture. As he regarded them they were the sanctities of balance and proportion, of perfect line, of mouldings reverently pondered, of decoration most sparingly applied. Like McKim he saw not the work on paper but the completed edifice. At the time of his death there were some wrought-iron grilles to be made for which he had supplied only rough drawings, marking on these, though, the exact figures to be followed. When the iron-worker questioned the figures as unprecedented White told him, nevertheless, to obey them, loyally remembering that Wells always knew what he was about. In the upshot the grilles only gave another proof of this. I

cannot name a single work of architecture as pure Wells, but the group of houses known as the Villard block when it was erected in Madison Avenue back of the Cathedral has in it perhaps more of him than could be traced without difficulty anywhere else. It reveals, of course, his cult for Bramante, for the Renaissance both in Rome and in Florence, but it reveals also his freedom from anything like pedantic imitation. Where he and McKim were utterly at one was in the employment of Italian ideas in a thoroughly creative spirit. Without him McKim would as surely have been the great architect that we know; but with him he was on that much more fertile ground. Lost to the general view as he is, behind the works of his friends, Wells will still be held in honor, by those who knew him, as one of the prime contributors to our Renaissance.

IV

DANIEL H. BURNHAM

The leaders with whom we have thus far dealt had all much the same opportunity; their chance was to make, if they could, beautiful buildings. All the time there was another chance coming and this was seized by Daniel H. Burnham, who was born at Henderson, New York, in 1846, and early taken to Chicago. There he worked until he died in 1912.

The gods were kind to him. He came to maturity at just the time and in just the place favorable to the development of his special gifts. In partnership with the late John Wellborn Root, he practised his profession under conditions giving him a unique problem to solve. They were not æsthetic conditions; they were business conditions; and they were, perhaps, a little more closely identified than any others with the daily movement of American life. It is customary when dealing with American literature or painting to talk about the growth in this country of intellectual interests and of the love of beauty. We take account of progress made. We speculate as to possible gains in the future. If architecture is our theme, we reflect more particularly on the evolution of an American style. Meanwhile the genius of the American people has fully and conclusively expressed itself, if anywhere, in the domain of practical things, and it has given to architecture not a style but a species — the office building fifteen, or fifty, stories high. It was Burnham's part to illustrate this species, to do something in America that had never been done elsewhere. I do not mean that he invented it, for the entire profession has been occupied, more or less, with the construction of tall buildings ever since the steel-cage principle was established. It was to his partner, John Root, too, that much of the character in the earlier work of the firm was due. But from the start Burnham was a

builder of sky-scrapers, and it was in that rôle that he achieved special distinction. Though he put to his credit other work of rich significance, as will be seen below, his office buildings belong in the forefront of his biography.

Consider the need put before him when he undertook to design them. It was not, in the first place, that they should be beautiful. It was that they should contain so many square feet of well-lighted space for renting purposes, the amount of space that would yield the owner a certain return on his investment. Owners vary in temperament. Some of them realize that a building is the more profitable as it is the more attractive to look upon. But in essentials the demand framed above is the demand made upon all designers of tall office buildings. When they settle down to work, they have to create a little cosmos, finding space for more things than go into any other type of building, with the possible exception of a great modern hotel. Take a typical building designed by Burnham. First come engine-rooms that in themselves embody interesting ideas of construction. Then come safe-deposit vaults. On a higher level you will find shops and elaborately planned banking quarters, a restaurant, a rathskeller, and a café. Eight or ten elevators — some of them expresses — rise past hundreds of offices to club-rooms that lie just under the roof, where a garden puts the last touch to the building. In the marble-lined corridors

there are faucets supplying filtered ice-water. There is hot as well as cold water in the lavatories. Corners for the telegraph companies are not forgotten. Facilities for mailing letters are on every floor as a matter of course. The man who chose to sleep in his office could live in a building like this all the year round. Obviously, the architect who serves his interests must be a master of humdrum detail. But he must be more than that if he is to satisfy his professional instinct, which is to make the outside of his building expressive of its inner character. Here arises a question which has been getting itself discussed for years, but which still remains on debatable ground.

The architect is an artist quite as much as the painter, the sculptor, or the musician, and he is loath to abdicate his artistic functions simply because he is confronted by a problem apparently insoluble on a strictly artistic hypothesis. Two elements in that problem drive him almost to despair. His building must be so much greater in height than in depth or breadth that it seems impossible, to begin with, that his composition should have rational proportions. Of course if he could conceive of his building simply as a tower, all might go well; but he is generally hemmed in by other buildings on three sides, and, what is worse, there is his second cruel element to be reckoned with — the necessity for piercing the façade on every floor with the greatest possible number of windows. There is something grimly humorous about

his predicament. Fate, grinning maliciously over his shoulder, drives him into an *impasse*, insisting that his is an engineering problem, not an artistic one, and urging him to make the best of a bad bargain. It is odds, however, that he will kick against the pricks, and move heaven and earth to show that where others have failed he will triumph, turning a sky-scraper into a work of art. There is something touching about the resolution with which the architects of America have held to this view of the matter. I have heard many of them arguing about it, and suggesting one new way or another out of the *impasse* just mentioned. At a dinner of the Architectural League, a few years ago, the walls were covered with drawings and photographs of sky-scrapers, and all the speeches of the evening were devoted to the subject. One member had some interesting things to say about the use of steel externally as well as internally. He thought that if the cage were permitted to declare itself in the façade instead of being hidden in a shell of stone or brick, the result would at least be sincere and might even be made picturesque. There was talk, too, of using sheets of metal decoratively, and, of course, the claims of color were duly advocated. Polychromatic façades have been built in Europe, and some of them are charming, but then they have been executed on a very modest scale. The experiment of treating the sky-scraper in color from top to bottom has not yet been tried. There is a chimney-

like building in Chicago over which I believe Mr. Root used to let his color sense play in imagination, but his dream was never realized. I could not help feeling at the League dinner to which I have referred that all ideas of lending an artistic significance to the sky-scraper are akin to such stuff as dreams are made of. After all, do they not resolve themselves into a principle which would transmogrify the sky-scraper into something else, making it a hybrid instead of the clean-cut symbol of American business life that it can be made so long as the architect recognizes his limitations and plays the game?

Burnham played the game. That is what made him a conspicuous and valuable figure in American architecture. All that despair of which I have spoken is reserved for the designer who will not look facts in the face, but doggedly goes on evading them and producing sky-scrapers which are impressive, if at all, by virtue of their bulk alone. Burnham went to the root of the matter. Perceiving that the sky-scraper rests upon a principle of prosaic simplicity, he made simplicity the keynote of his work. He made no effort to disguise the fact that such a building is just a succession of so many layers of cubicles, all calling for light and air. He gave those cubicles the value belonging to them in the composition, only endeavoring, as he multiplied windows, to break up their monotony by the most judicious means. He was, as a rule, sparing of decoration. To lighten

the appalling masses with which he had to deal, he looked rather to modifications, at a few points, of the broad structural lines. Thus, in the Railway Exchange at Chicago, a building seventeen stories high on a space 171 feet square, he gained relief for his façades, and a measure of light and shade, by throwing out shallow bays at regular intervals, and carrying these bays from the third floor to the twelfth. Just beneath the cornice the windows were made circular, and the surface around them was enriched with sculptured ornament. Otherwise the building is as bald as the packing-cases with which so many skyscrapers have been compared, and, save that it has a cornice lacking in weight and that the entrances want emphasis, the building is a success. That is, it looks like an office building; it is dignified and in good taste. Elsewhere Burnham used with admirable effect a system of classical columns, two stories high, at the bottom of his building, with a similar system of columns or pilasters supporting arches beneath the cornice. The First National Bank and Commerical National Bank Buildings in Chicago, the Ford Building in Detroit, the Frick Building in Pittsburg, all bear witness to the usefulness of this motive. In the Frick Building still further variety is gained by the division of the façades, from the lower system of columns to the upper system, into arched sections, the arches resting on long, slender piers. But it cannot be said that the physiognomy of any

one of Burnham's sky-scrapers is radically differentiated from that of another. Every one of them is simplicity itself. Are any of them beautiful, in the strict interpretation of the word? Hardly that. Theirs is the beauty of fitness. They are beautiful as a great war-ship is beautiful. If they have a grace, it is the grace of refinement, but that is all. Now this is not to say that Burnham, in leaving beauty to take care of itself, left out something without which his work is lifeless. On the contrary, it is to say that he got at the secret of his problem and magnificently triumphed.

There is one sky-scraper of his which, more than any other, has provoked discussion—the Fuller Building on Madison Square, better known as the Flatiron. It has been denounced as merely hideous. Some people maintain that it is beautiful, either because they like to entertain views which they are pleased to regard as original, or because they have observed the building looming in the fog, late on a winter's night, with lights in many of its windows. For my own part, I believe that its considerable merit lies in nothing more nor less than its consummate exploitation of the eccentric site as a business investment. Every inch of the space available is put to profitable purpose. Corridors, elevators, lavatories, and staircases are concentrated in the centre of the building, with the result that every office has an abundance of light and air. As for the façades, they

are inferior to others by the same designer chiefly because their surfaces are rather more freely teased with expedients meant to secure decorative effect and relief. One adverse commentator on the building, criticising it at the time of its completion, neglected to ascertain the name of its designer, and gravely stated in print that the misguided man might have done better if only he had gone to sit at the feet of Burnham. That blunder was an oblique testimony to the fundamental strength of Burnham's work. He accustomed his critics to simplicity and mass. Striving, for once, in the Flatiron, for an impossible lightness, he gave some ground for the assumption that the building had been done by some one else. For once he lost his hold on his best resource, the resource that marks him as so much an American, a masterly kind of common sense.

Is that quality incompatible with the artistic sense? Was Burnham any less the artist because he designed his sky-scrapers from a rigidly practical point of view? The best answer to these questions lies in the record of his work on great civic improvements. He showed something of what he could do in this direction in 1893, when, as chief architect and director for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, he bore a fruitful part in that extraordinary architectural ensemble. Later he was identified with various public schemes of importance. He was made Chairman of the National Commission established

for beautifying the city of Washington, and he served in the same capacity on a similar commission formed in Cleveland. Chicago and San Francisco claimed his ability for work along these lines, and some years ago he submitted reports to the Secretary of War on proposed improvements in Manila and Baguio, in the Philippines. It is impossible to traverse here in detail any of these schemes, but that, indeed, is not really necessary. The important thing is the general character of the inspiration he brought to his grandiose tasks. His first thought, after looking over the ground, was for the every-day necessities of the city. His report on the improvements proposed at San Francisco, before the earthquake, accounted for public and private buildings, looking boldly to the future, but at the same time showing a proper solicitude for the situation then existing and the adjustment of a policy of adaptation and slow change to one of ultimate creation. Beauty was sought—beauty in architecture and in vistas; but convenience was constantly remembered, as was so unpoetic a thing as sanitation. Turning then to the lovely natural surroundings of the city, Burnham worked out a heroic plan, contemplating the bringing of something like unity out of the vast area, and the linking of the city through landscape-gardening, monumental terraces, and so on with the wild panorama stretching beyond its limits.

The report on proposed improvements at Washing-

ton framed by Burnham in collaboration with his fellow-architect, McKim, the sculptor, Saint-Gaudens, and the landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., makes, with its maps, diagrams, plans, and other illustrations, a stout volume. In a nutshell, it advocates the extension and perfection of L'Enfant's famous plan, and the creation of a symmetrical whole, embracing balanced groups of public buildings, with parks, monuments, and fountains all contributing to one superb effect. The classical motive has already been fixed at Washington as the one which should control, and how well Burnham understood this is shown by the Union Station, which is his personal contribution to the architectural scheme. But what is bound especially to impress the reader of this report is the deeper and broader conception it reveals, a conception transcending that of architectural style. The point to the whole document lies in its presentation of a city made beautiful not only with builded stone but with water, earth, and sky. A glorious avenue of trees is made as important to the plan as the Capitol itself. The object aimed at is not a museum of monumental buildings for the architectural student, but a beautiful city for men to live in. A passage in Burnham's report on improvements suggested for Manila recommends the development of a certain section along the water-front with a view to fostering the social life of the city; and in a footnote the architect says:

The delightfulness of a city is an element of first importance to its prosperity, for those who make fortunes will stay and others will come if the attractions are strong enough; and the money thus kept at home, added to that freely spent by visitors, will be enough to insure continuous good times. The aim should be to make Manila really "The Pearl of the Orient."

That note is characteristic of Burnham, characteristic in its feeling for things "delightful," and in its sterling common sense. Washington, San Francisco, Cleveland, Chicago, and the cities of the Philippines will be, if his ideas are supported, places of beauty. Also they will be healthful, convenient places, good to live in. It is a great thing that the artist should dream dreams, but it is equally important that he should know and sympathize with the world in which he lives. Burnham's work, whether it took the shape of a sky-scraper or of a city clothed in new beauty, was first and last a demonstration of this truth.

That is what allies him to Hunt and McKim, and that is why his leadership, like theirs, meant progress where Richardson's threatened to land us in disaster. American architecture is still subject to insidiously harmful conditions. The feverish demands of fashion, for example, have fostered the growth of parasitical talents, undeniably clever but too often content to turn a façade into an *article de Paris*, masking an interior all finickin luxury and decoration. But our school, as a school, has its face set toward the light.

XIV

J. Pierpont Morgan as a Collector

XIV

J. PIERPONT MORGAN AS A COLLECTOR

In his rôle of collector Mr. Morgan was something of a mystery to the world at large. Every one knew that he had vast artistic possessions, and in the very nature of things it was inevitable that a wide publicity should have followed many of his transactions. The cables were always busy with his campaigns among the purchasable art treasures of Europe. Some one was always sure to let us know what they had cost him. But it was never Mr. Morgan who had anything to say on these subjects, and his friends, if they happened to be in the secret of any of his doings, were wont to respect his reticent habit. Others who were in a position to talk about his policy as a collector, if I may so describe it, were taught to keep their own counsel. There is a pretty legend of one agent whose loquacity was summarily quenched by a telegram more picturesquely terse than polite. The upshot of all this was that the personality of J. Pierpont Morgan as a collector remained practically unknown, and I make no pretence of giving a full and conclusive account of it. The precise range

and significance of his different tastes could only be set forth by one of his intimates and advisers, like Mr. Fitz-Henry, who, by a pathetic coincidence died but a very short time before the decease of his old friend. But no one could play the part that Mr. Morgan played in the accumulation of works of art without exposing here and there some of his methods, and the mere results of these throw a certain light on the subject.

In one important point the commentators who have been busy since Mr. Morgan's death have done him a little less than justice, not so much through what they have said as through what they have, perhaps unconsciously, implied. Everywhere it has been remarked that he was not a connoisseur in the strict sense, not one of those collectors who put a personal stamp upon their collections. Dr. Bode published in Berlin an article full of appreciation but decisive in its assertion that Mr. Morgan was not an expert. Now, while these statements are doubtless to be accepted as true, it is perhaps as well to remind the layman that they do not denote any singularity in the man to whom they refer. As a collector Mr. Morgan was, indeed, fully representative of his time, at least in the United States. Very few of our best-known collectors have been connoisseurs and experts. Quite as much as Mr. Morgan they have profited by the aid of dealers and other counsellors. An amateur like Mr. John G.

Johnson, of Philadelphia, who not only knows what he likes but knows why he likes it, and pursues an essentially independent path, is the rarest of types, here or abroad. Most observers of artistic affairs are aware of this fact, but in print and in conversation I have often noted a disposition to place an emphasis upon Mr. Morgan's want of special knowledge which has seemed just a shade unfair. If he confided in others he did not, at any rate, do so any more than dozens of his contemporaries, whose comparative freedom from the same criticism constitutes half my point. And, it may be added, he knew where to get good advice, and, having got it, followed it. Furthermore, there could be no question of his enjoyment of the things which he thus procured.

Some years ago, in the house at Prince's Gate, so richly stored with masterpieces, I had an opportunity to witness the disclosure of both these traits. A representative of one of the dealers turned up, bringing a parcel which contained a rare old French enamel. Mr. Morgan silently watched the man as he unwrapped the precious object, looked it over sympathetically and then ordered it wrapped up again. He made no comment revealing what he thought, but simply asked the messenger why he had brought the enamel to his house. On being told that it was offered to him for purchase he said that the dealer sending it must have known perfectly well that he wished things of the kind submitted to So-and-So

and So-and-So, naming two recognized experts, one of them an official in the British Museum. Dismissing the matter in this way, he turned to his visitor for a stroll among the pictures. Thereupon the curt, businesslike tone disappeared, giving place to one of sheer pleasure in the things around him. From time to time he would be called away, but in a few moments he would be back again, evidently forgetful in a trice of practical affairs and quietly happy with his works of art. It was interesting to note, by the way, that while his remarks on one painting or another revealed no predilection for any particular school, a peculiar enthusiasm did seem to awaken in him when he sat down to the miniatures and fairly beamed over their beauties. Merely from the way in which he handled them it was plain that they had a favored place in his heart. Mr. Fitz-Henry was there, and they talked about the little portraits, recalling how one or another of them had been secured. Later, too, it developed that where miniatures were concerned he would sometimes range, regardless of the expert, and come home to take a gem or two out of his pocket and smilingly add it to the collection. There, in one field of art, at all events, he suggested a very personal ardor.

In the main, however, he would seem to have brought to his dealings with the world of art much the same temper and swift organizing authority which characterized his work in finance. It was like him to buy whole collections at a stroke when once he had

satisfied himself that they were worth buying. Incidentally, it might be pointed out that there is nothing intrinsically to be deprecated in this practice. Probably he would have bought the objects contained in these collections piece by piece if they had been brought in that way to his attention. As it happened, he had the money to buy a mass of treasure at a time when it offered, and, besides this, one does not need to be very imaginative in order to see that for a man devoting himself to this hobby so late in life purchases of extraordinary magnitude were really necessary. It is said that he was a collector, after his fashion, from his young manhood if not from his youth, but during most of his career he was a busy banker. If, as we seem justified in assuming, he fostered in his later years the idea of rendering a great artistic service to his countrymen, there can be no question of his having gone the right way about it when he turned the market upside down and bought collections as he bought steel plants or shipping lines. There is a touch of cant in the disparagement of his exercise of what has been called the brute power of the purse. Every successful bidder in the auction-room, whether his prize be valued in the hundreds or in the thousands, uses that power. And if it is any consolation to the wiseacres who shake their heads over his "ruthlessness" it may be recorded that he did not always get what he wanted.

One of the most amusing of the stories that have

been told about him relates to a glorious masterpiece of the eighteenth-century French school which was on view one beautiful spring day in the gallery of a Parisian dealer. Mr. Morgan came in, saw it, liked it, but not being in a very talkative mood went away without saying anything save that he would be in again with a friend. He had scarcely disappeared when a wealthy French collector visited the place, fell in love with the picture, paid for it then and there and took it away with him in a cab. The next morning Mr. Morgan returned, this time bringing his friend, and said: "I want to see my picture." According to the story, when the cruel facts had been laid before him, it took some time to appease his bewildered wrath. Apropos of this episode with one dealer, it may safely be surmised that members of the fraternity could report many others. All over Europe they knew him, and, as was shown by the crowds of people with things to sell besieging him at his hotel in Rome as he lay dying, all manner of commercial hopes and fears revolved around him. The few firms that especially catered to him and satisfied him could not keep a multitude of venders from trying their luck. The humors of the fray must sometimes have been exquisite. Were there also less engaging developments? Are there many works of art in Mr. Morgan's immense collection which are not quite what they pretend to be? For my own part I doubt if there are any at all, and this for two rea-

sons. In the first place, as I have indicated above, he was an incessant seeker after expert advice. Secondly, it is hard to see why anybody who had his own interest to serve should have tried to swindle the one man who, more than any other, was buying all kinds of works of art and generously paying for them. That dealer would have needed to be a fearful fool who was willing to carry frauds to a collector whose counsellors could so quickly set him right and whose insistence upon honesty would thenceforth have made further profitable transactions flatly impossible. The very scope of Mr. Morgan's artistic operations protected him against deception. In this matter he carried, as it were, his own insurance. On the other hand, it is probably true that extravagant prices were inseparable from his mode of procedure. He had to pay the penalty of his renown as a buyer and of his haste. The same collection, slowly formed during a long lifetime, by a bargainer saturated in the lore of his subjects, would no doubt have cost but half of what Mr. Morgan paid for it, if it had cost that much.

What, when all is said, remains salient and most characteristic when we consider the presumable reaction upon Mr. Morgan of the prodigious adventures which he crowded within a few short years of collecting? Can we, from the wilderness of objects he assembled, divine some one prevailing note of taste? The question seems almost unanswerable in view of

the portentous variety of his possessions. In that London house where we have seen him delighting in his miniatures there hung his numerous and beautiful portraits of the English school, and in other rooms there were Dutch and Spanish masterpieces. One room was dedicated by itself to that celebrated and enchanting set of decorative panels which Fragonard painted in his safe retirement at Grasse while the Terror raged in Paris. The series was marvellously installed in its twentieth-century home amid the London fogs. Everything, the walls and woodwork, the mantel-piece with its appropriate eighteenth-century statuettes, the glass-covered tables full of miniatures and snuff-boxes, the chairs, and the very carpet on the floor, had been so chosen that Fragonard and the Du Barry herself would have wept for joy if they could have seen the perfection of the ensemble. Only a collector definitely in love with the school and the period, one would have said, could have achieved that beautiful harmony. But was Mr. Morgan in love with it? I do not know. If he could have a cult for Fragonard, so likewise could he have a cult for Holbein, for Oriental porcelains, for Italian bronzes and other sculptures, for old watches of every age and country, for rare books and manuscripts, for so many things, in short, that it is idle even to attempt the most summary of lists. And yet I would hazard the speculation that there was one sphere in which his mind received a notable and perhaps predomi-

nant stimulus. It was that of the Italian Renaissance.

The many roads he traversed on his annual European journeys sooner or later all led to Rome. Italian art is forever cropping out in his collection. He obtained an amazing body of Renaissance bronzes and marbles; his collection of drawings includes many fine Italian examples, and he secured a number of Italian paintings, among which I must particularly mention the fascinating portrait of Giovanna degli Albizzi, by Ghirlandajo, which he got out of the Rodolphe Kann collection. But most significant of all was the atmosphere in which he chose to be enveloped in that building next door to his New York home which was designed as a library by the late Charles F. McKim. He gave that great architect a free hand. All that he asked for was a consummate work of art. McKim gave it to him in the shape of a flawless little Renaissance palazzo. Exquisite in its simplicity and in the balance of its proportions, it was planned with an ideal of both structural and decorative unity. It has been complained of Mr. Morgan that he did not buy modern American pictures. In this library he found room for no American decorations. Naturally, neither he nor McKim dreamed of bringing an incongruous note into the scheme. They turned, instead, to the style of Pintoricchio, the one master of the Renaissance who was bound to come to mind. His inspiration had been

caught by Mr. H. Siddons Mowbray when he was decorating the beautiful library of the University Club for McKim, and Mr. Morgan, mounting to the scaffolds there, saw how well the American artist was equipped to do just what he wanted. Whereupon Mr. Mowbray and Mr. J. W. Finn tackled the ceiling in the collector's library and felicitously rounded out McKim's Italianate conception. It was unquestionably the genius of McKim that was thus expressed, but there, too, I believe, Mr. Morgan's taste "found" itself. He had shown his feeling for Italy in divers ways. He had been one of the keenest supporters of that American academy at Rome which McKim had cherished as his dearest dream and had worked for with infectious zeal. When he had at last made for himself the space of quietude and beauty that he wanted among his books it was one expressive in its every detail of the spirit of the Renaissance. Surely this could not have been due to any accident of circumstance. The whole artistic character of the library must have had its origin in a strong predilection.

The full tale of his energies as a collector will not for some time be known. The treasures on which he spent sixty million dollars or more are so numerous that when ultimately they are concentrated in one place they will make by themselves one of the notable museums in the world. Whatever that museum may express in revelation of Mr. Morgan's

make-up as a collector, the one outstanding fact to which it will always clearly point is his public generosity. First and last, he was extraordinarily generous with his works of art, lending them for public exhibition, and sometimes for long periods, both in New York and abroad. The great Hoentschel collection of decorative art, which has a whole wing to itself, and the grand array of the Garland porcelains would alone rank him as a memorable benefactor of the Metropolitan Museum. But as you go through that institution there is scarce any department in which you will not, over and over again, come upon the label signifying that the object bearing it was given or lent by Mr. Morgan. And the help which he thus rendered at home he rendered not infrequently to foreign museums. If he knew how to acquire he knew also how to give. That is the fine thought which is bound to dwell with us as we reflect on the life of J. Pierpont Morgan as an art-collector. He spent a lot of money in the world of precious rarities, and he had his own way. In the long run what he did has worked, as all the time he would seem to have meant it to work, for the benefit of his countrymen.

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